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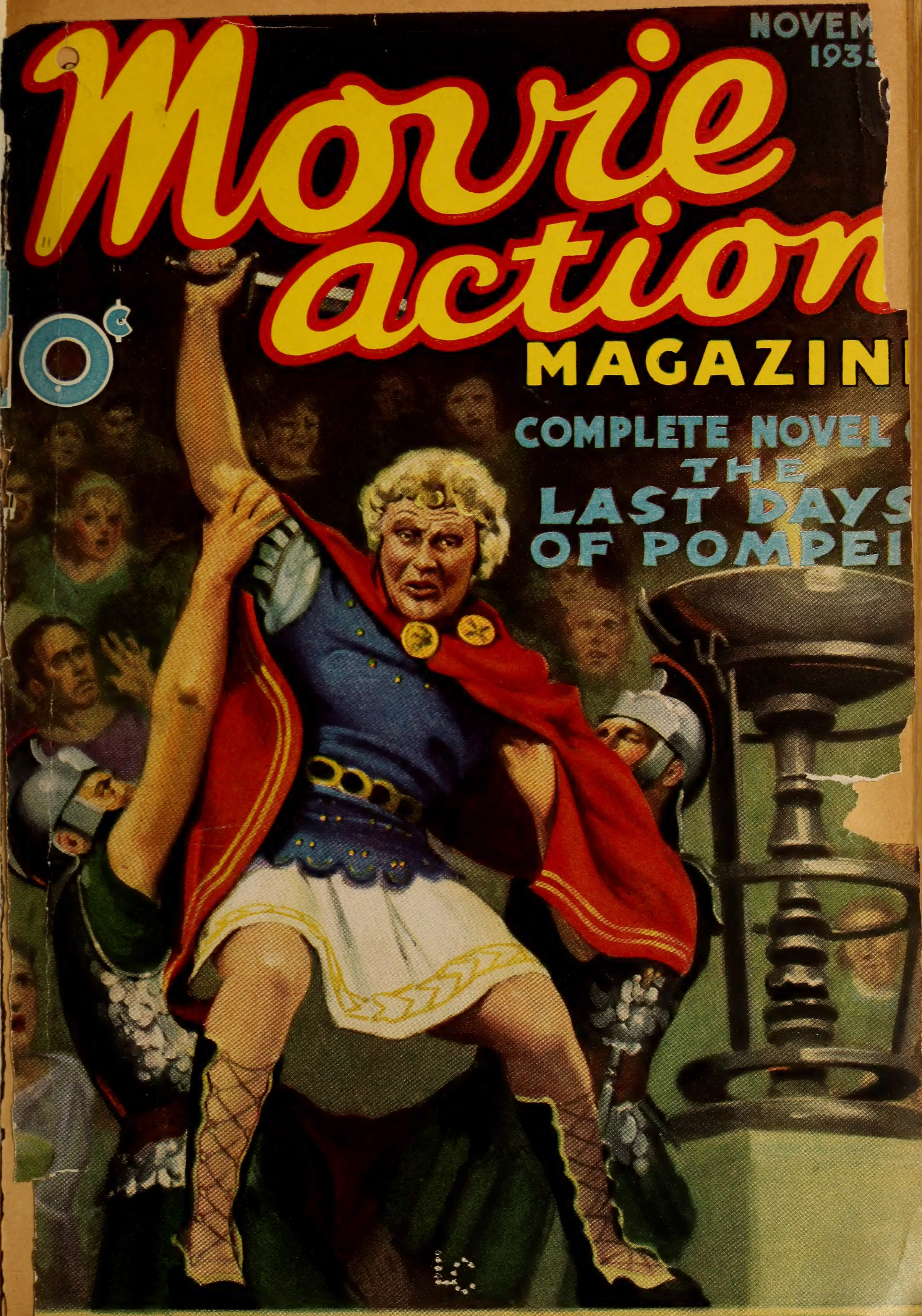
THE
LAST DAYS
OF POMPEI



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JOHN L. NANOVIC, Editor.

ROBERT SIDMAN, Associate Editor.

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Volume I · November, 1935 · Number 1

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The Movie Round-up

THE CRUSADES

A Paramount Picture, with Loretta Young, Henry Wilcoxon, C. Aubrey Smith, and hundreds more.

C. B. DeMille, who makes nothing but the biggest spectacles, has put together some of the most exciting battle scenes and one of the grandest love stories to date. Picture deals with affairs and adventures of Richard the Lion-Hearted, King of England in the days of knighthood, who led a mighty army into the Holy Land. It is all the thrilling stories you used to love to hear told about "brave knights in shining armor" rolled into one.

MORE THAN YOUR MONEY'S WORTH. MUCH MORE!

THE DARK ANGEL

A Samuel Goldwyn Picture, with Fredric March, Merle Oberon, and Herbert Marshall.

It's hard to be fair about this really outstanding picture. It has all the beauty and warmth of an autumn sunset. It has the reality, the inevitability of the green grass that grows in the spring. We may be softies, but if you can sit through this gently disturbing film, and watch the torture of a man gone blind who wants the girl he loves to have more happiness than he thinks he can give her—if you can sit through THE DARK ANGEL, we repeat, without suffering with him while you are watching it and without feeling finer for having seen it when it is done, then we miss our guess!

THE LADIES WILL LOVE YOU ALL THE MORE IF YOU'LL TAKE THEM TO THIS ONE!

DR. SOCRATES

A Warner Brothers Picture, with Paul Muni, Ann Dvorak, and Robert Barrat.

A thrilling piece of work, this DR. SOCRATES! Paul Muni is a struggling country doctor who becomes involved in gangsterdom despite all his efforts to make an honest living. Both he and his girl are kidnaped, the girl because she has caught the fancy of the gang leader, and Muni because they have been shot up and need medical attention. Then come the G-Men and one of the flashiest endings to any picture ever screened!

MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE HEREBY NOMINATES PAUL MUNI FOR ETERNAL FAME. HE'S THE MOST HUMAN-LOOKING LEADING MAN ON THE SCREEN TO-DAY!

Continued on page 95

MOVIE ACTION'S WORLD PREMIERE

Though there are no spotlights, no celebrities, no great ovations to mark the event, this is the World Premiere of MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE. It is somewhat unlike the "movies" to hold such a simple opening, but this magazine intends to be very much unlike the dozens of movie magazines which fill up news stands to-day. We intend no hullabaloo, no great ovations. We will not cater to the fancy of the screen—we will seek the real merit in it, the strength and quality of motion pictures to-day.

Although this will be a magazine for the movie fan, it will not in any sense be a fan magazine. We will give you the stories of the pictures which are scheduled to appear in your local theater. We will give you this story for the story itself, not for the actors, or for the "show" which the producer may make about it. Whether the picture is the featured picture of the year, or the production of some unknown independent will make no difference to us, so long as it has a STORY that is thrilling and interesting; a story that moves and has action.

This is the field we seek to fill, and we will do everything in our power to make our task successful. You can count on the best from us, for nothing less will do. We will not be sugary; we will not become fanatical over the newest star of the screen. But we will be thrilled by every good story which is to be filmed, and will give it to you before it appears on the screen. And we will give you facts and features of Hollywood without varnish, without frills. We'll talk straight from the shoulder, and attend strictly to business. We hope you readers will be glad to have such a refreshing viewpoint focused upon the movie world and stay with us.

The Editor

A slave carried a silver basin of water and a napkin to Pontius.

THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII

He gave up wealth, power, caste—everything; cast his lot with slaves so that he might live the life he dreamed of!

CHAPTER I.

RICHES OF MARCUS.

MARCUS, the giant blacksmith, ceased clanging on his anvil. Through the open door of his shed, he heard the clanking of chains. The sweating coffle approached through the square of the market place. The line of captive barbarians was being herded by the guards of Cleon, procurer of victims for the Arena.

The small, ratlike Cleon carried a long whip. Frequently he flicked it viciously at some half-naked prisoner. Marcus shrugged his massive shoulders with disgust. The blacksmith was a peaceable and a kindly man.

Though dirty and sweating, the hammer of his occupation in his hand, Marcus took no great pride in the practices of his native Pompeii. He disapproved strongly of the methods the wicked city adopted in the procuring of its riches.

Marcus looked across the crowded market place. Below sparkled the Bay of Naples. Pleasure craft, ships of treasure dotted its surface. Above the market place arose the white columns of the Temple of Jupiter. Before the temple a robed priest chanted over a

THE CAST

Preston Foster	as Marcus	The Blacksmith
Helen Mack	as Lucia	The Prefect's slave
John Wood	as Flavius, the man	Marcus' adopted son
Alan Hale	as Burbix	Marcus' aide
Basil Rathbone	as Pontius Pilate	Roman Governor of Judea
David Holt	as Flavius, the boy	Marcus' adopted son
Louis Calhern	as the Prefect	A high official of Pompeii
Wyrley Birch	as Leaster	Greek slave
Gloria Shea	as Julia	Marcus' wife
William V. Mong	as Cleon	A slave dealer
Dorothy Wilson	as Clodia	Flavius' sweetheart
Edward Van Sloan	as Calvus	Marcus' neighbor
Frank Conroy	as Gaius	A wealthy citizen of Pompeii
Marc Lobell	as Lucius	A Roman in Pompeii
Jason Robards	as the Tax Gatherer	
Murray Kinnell	as Simon	A follower of Christ
Jack Mulhall	as a Citizen of Pompeii	
Margaret McWade	as Calvus' wife	
Winston Hibler	as Marcellus	A wealthy citizen of Pompeii
Helen Freeman	as Martha	A peasant woman
Thomas Jackson	as the Lanista	In charge of the gladiators
Ward Bond	as Murmex	A gladiator
Reginald Barlow	as the Janitor	In charge of slave market
Zeffie Tilbury	as the Wise Woman	
Edwin Maxwell	as the Augur	
Maurice Black	as attendant in gladiators' dressing room	

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Radio
PICTURES

Based on original story
by James Ashmore Creelman
and Melville Baker
Screen Play by Ruth Rose
A Merian C. Cooper Production
Directed by Ernest B. Schoedsack

slain lamb, from which the blood had come to stain his hands.

Around the priest was the usual morning throng. The worshipers of the great god Jupiter, who gave them the spoils of their enemies and the pleasures of the Arena. Beyond the Temple of Jupiter reared the great circle of the Arena itself, with its huge carved figure of Colossus.

Colossus and Jupiter, the symbols of Rome. And Rome ruled the world. These thoughts came to Marcus now. His eyes sought the majestic Forum, but his thoughts went to the auction place of the slaves in its shadow. For the great, prosperous, wicked city of Pompeii lived by its slaves, by the treasures of the barbarians Rome despoiled.

Pompeii's vineyards and gardens, the estates of its rich men and the hovels of its workers and its beggars sprawled on the slopes of the mountain. The city clung to the little valleys rising from the bay. Old Vesuvius bulked serenely over all of its life, its pleasures and its poverty. Marcus saw that Vesuvius, as usual, was plumed by white steam.

The priest chanted his ritual to Jupiter. Horsemen clattered through the market place. Vendors in dirty robes cried the fruits of Africa. Shopmen bargained with gabbling women. Rich men and women passed to and fro, borne in litters. Now and then a chariot rumbled among dodging beggars and children.

Supporting all the pomp and splendor, or the pleasure and vice, and all the poverty and beggary, was Rome. Rome ruling, reaching out, robbing and enslaving the peoples of many lands. Marcus, in his simple fashion, thought of all this as he turned toward his anvil.

Then he saw the procession of slaves had halted. A giant barbarian was fighting the chains binding his wrists to his girdle. He was a Scythian, a rare prize for the Arena. Cleon, the slave dealer, was trembling with rage. He shouted to a guard.

"Do something! Have the chains of that beast fixed!"

"Marcus, the blacksmith, can mend the chain," said the guard.

FOUR guards seized the Scythian. They dragged the snarling slave toward the open front of the blacksmith's shed.

Marcus tightened his lips distastefully. This job was not to his liking. He looked with compassion on this barbarian, who must soon die in the Arena.

The four guards clung to the Scythian's arms. Cleon ordered the remainder of the coffle to proceed toward the Arena. A filthy, whining beggar scuffled away in the black dust.

"What's wanted?" scowled Marcus, the hammer on his hip.

"This beast is about to break one of his links," said a guard.

Marcus pushed the guards back with one brawny arm.

"Prisoner of war?" he said to Cleon.

"Yes, I picked this Scythian out of a batch of two hundred. He is more wild beast than a man. He will do well in the Arena."

Marcus was testing the link at the Scythian's waist. The barbarian snapped the chain suddenly. The blacksmith's hammer was close by. The terrible weapon swung in the giant slave's hands, aimed at the cringing head of Cleon.

Marcus struck the Scythian with one shoulder. The hammer just missed Cleon's skull. The blacksmith's arms tensed. He lifted the Scythian bodily, hurling him into the street. He followed the slave with a headlong dive and pinned him to the ground. The huge barbarian was helpless. The guards leaped upon him.

Cleon thrust his whip into Marcus's hand.

"Beat him! Flog him! Only don't spoil him for the Arena!"

"Beat a man held down by four soldiers?" exclaimed Marcus with scorn. "The poor devil!"

"Poor devil!" barked Cleon. "Why, you saved my life from him!"

"You're the only person who'd thank me for that," said Marcus.

Slaves bearing a rich man's litter had halted near by. The rich man was Gaius, a leading sponsor of the Arena. Gaius walked toward the forge of Marcus.

A young woman of lovely form came from the living quarters of the blacksmith shop. She held a baby in her arms.

"Marcus, what has happened?" she cried. "Are you hurt?"

"No, my sweet Julia," assured Marcus, his arm about her.

The guards dragged the Scythian to the forge. Gaius, the rich man, stood in the shop front. Cleon exclaimed obsequiously.

Guards held the Scythian's arms. Marcus was riveting the stocks. Gaius ran an eye over the blacksmith's magnificent figure.

"Well entertained!" he said. "You should be in the Arena!"

"Gaius Tanno is right, Marcus," agreed Cleon. "Did you ever consider the Arena?" He licked his predatory lips.

"I'm a man of peace," said Marcus, without looking from his work.

"For a peace lover, you're a handy fighter," praised Gaius.

"I fight when I have to. I couldn't fight one who had never harmed me."

"You could make money," whined Cleon ingratiatingly.

"Not that way; I've enough money," said Marcus, standing back.

Cleon sneered, "Of course, if you're a rich man, a few coppers won't interest you." He handed Marcus the coins. "That's for the job, and I'm adding a coin for saving my life."

"Just about what the job's worth," smiled the blacksmith.

Cleon, scowling, went away with his guards. Julia stood beside her husband. Marcus touched her cheek lightly.

"A man in chains, going to his death like a caged animal," he said gently. "Makes a man count his blessings, Julia."

MARCUS, the blacksmith

Gaius said, "Smith, you interest me. You said you had enough money? I never heard any one say that before. You remind me of a man walking a little rope high in the air."

"I'm not walking a rope," smiled Marcus, whimsically.

"Oh, yes you are," insisted Gaius. "Every poor man is. Some little unexpected thing, and you're down—smashed!" He looked at Julia. "What does your wife think? She is ambitious for her son."

"I hope he will grow up to be just like his father," said Julia.

"Like a poem of Theocritus," smiled Gaius. "Idyllic, and impractical. Here, buy something for the young blacksmith."

WHEN Gaius had departed, Marcus looked at the silver coin the rich man had given him.

"Don't you think we ought to save it?" suggested Julia.

"No, this is a windfall," smiled Marcus.

"We'll take the baby to see the puppet show."

Old Calvus, a neighbor, stood in the door as they departed.

All about them the city was white and sparkling. A panoplied horseman rode toward the Forum across the dusty market place. The usual beggar clung to his stirrup. The horseman pushed him on his face with his foot.

A goat-herd clad in skins played on a small flute. He was leading his herd across the market place. Shopkeepers bargained loudly with customers. Goods were unpriced. They got what they could.

Rich citizens rode in litters. One rich woman waved away a piece of silk a shopkeeper offered her. Marcus pressed Julia's arm and offered to buy the silk.

"Maybe to wear when I cook dinner?" she laughed at him.

A bright, red ball took the fancy of Marcus. He bought it for the baby. Julia dangled the toy before the child's wondering eyes. The market place was suddenly filled with the rumble of a chariot.

A rich man was riding toward the Arena. His horses galloped four abreast. The sun gleamed on silver harness. Beggars and children scattered. The driver disregarded their danger.

The running horses were near when the string of the red ball broke. It rolled into the street. Julia sprang lightly after the toy. The baby was in her arms. Some one in the crowd cried out in warning.

Julia screamed. She stumbled. As she fell in the dust, one of the chariot horses reared in his jangling harness. The iron-shod hoofs of his forefeet hovered an instant over the woman and the child. The whip of the charioteer cracked.

The horse's feet descended. One wheel of the chariot ground over the mother. The charioteer cursed at the common rabble. He did not look back at the two beaten into the black dust. Marcus pillowed his young wife in his arms.

"The doctor!" exclaimed Marcus. "Some one send him to the forge!"

The broken body of his wife was in his great arms. A bystander came along, carrying the baby, and the baby was quiet.

DESPITE all the doctor could do, that day, another, then others went by with little hope. Then there came the morning when the doctor no longer called. Marcus was bent despairingly over a fire, warming some milk in a pan.

"Marcus!" called Julia's faint voice from the low bed. "The baby—I dreamed he was taken away——"

Marcus lifted the child and placed him in the crook of her arm.

"How long—have I—been lying here?" murmured Julia.

"Some days," said Marcus gently. "The doctor will come soon."

Old Calvus entered quietly. He heard Marcus say, "When the doctor comes, you'll both be well again—very soon."

"The doctor won't come again unless he is paid," said Calvus in a low tone.

"He *must* come!" gritted Marcus. "I'll pay him when I can!"

"He says he has plenty of patients who can pay him now."

The wife of Calvus, and another woman, entered.

"Go with Calvus to our house and get some sleep," said the wife.

"I can't," said Marcus. "The doctor must come——"

"Marcus!" arose a shout from the forge. "The tax gatherer!"

Two soldiers held the tax gatherer's horse before the forge. Marcus closed the house door carefully behind him.

"Look here, Marcus, this time I won't go without the tax!" declared the man on the horse.

"Hush!" commanded Marcus. "Don't let my wife hear you!"

"Well, where's the tax money?"

"I had it, but it's all gone to the doctor and for medicine."

"Bring the woman out!" ordered the tax gatherer. "Clear the house——"

"No!" rapped out Marcus. "You can't put a sick woman and baby into the street!" Then he had a thought. "Give me until to-night," he said, "and I'll go to Gaius Tanno. He is my friend."

The tax gatherer was impressed. He said to his soldiers, "We will give him until to-night."

GAIUS owned one of the greatest houses in Pompeii. On the portico of the arched gateway, a huge steward barred Marcus. In vain, the blacksmith pleaded. The steward quietly signaled to half a dozen near-by slaves.

"I can't let a half-naked, sweating smith rush in," declared the steward. "Out of the way, for here is a guest."

Slaves bore a litter in which rode a portly, prosperous man. The steward saluted him respectfully. Slaves rushed to attend him. Marcus crowded forward. He appealed to the arriving guest desperately.

"Sir, will you help me to see Gaius?"

The steward and the slaves pushed Marcus away. The rich guest looked at him scornfully. Marcus seized the steward's arm.

"Let me see Gaius!" he demanded, "or——"

Gaius said, "What does your wife think? She is ambitious for her son."

"Start a fight here, and you'll go to jail," said the steward. "Go to the Arena, if you want to fight."

Marcus became motionless. He looked across the hill toward the high, white circle of the Arena. A strange light came into his eyes. Abruptly, he abandoned his effort to see Gaius.

THE Lanista in charge of the gladiators was a gloomy, hawk-nosed man. But his hard eyes lighted as he ran them over the giant figure of Marcus.

"All right, you'll do," said the Lanista. "You'll go in the free-for-all—novices against veterans. If you put up a good fight, you'll get a gold piece or two."

Marcus was helped into the clumsy armor. He was given a broad, two-edged sword. A steel helmet with a visor was placed on his head. For the first time, the peaceable smith stood in the place of sports.

Wild beasts, lions and tigers from Africa, elephants from India roared, snarled and trumpeted. Marcus saw cringing slaves chained to the walls under the Arena gates. All these were for the lesser sports. Slaves with no fighting qualities soon would be in the pits with the beasts.

One such exhibition now was in progress. Some of the crowd gave approval. But the majority were greatly bored. The whining slaves were driven into the pits. The tigers tore them quickly to pieces. The elephants trampled them. It was all over too speedily.

Other gladiators stood waiting their turns. These man-to-man fights were the big feature of the day. Helmets in their hands, the gladiators sized up each other. Each knew that perhaps the man he was facing would soon batter him down, give him the death thrust.

Or, he might be so fortunate as to kill the other man.

Marcus looked at the veterans. A new batch of slaves was being driven into the pits by the Centurion. Among these were a few women. Some sobbed and screamed as they heard the snarling of the beasts aroused to blood lust.

One veteran smiled at Marcus pityingly. He was a friendly-appearing fellow. He felt sorry for this novice, this beginner who couldn't last. Marcus hefted his unwieldy sword.

With that same sword he was soon to be pitted against this friendly man who now had only sympathy for him.

In the high distance above the Arena the peak of Mount Vesuvius smoked moodily. Marcus went into the Arena under the towering, carved figure of Colossus.

He was trying to think only of his young wife and his baby son. To-night, if he failed, the tax gatherer would put them into the street.

CHAPTER II.

MONEY OF BLOOD.

THE visored opponent of Marcus was a veteran swordsman. But the blacksmith swung his blade with the strength and fury of a maniac. Cheers went up from the noblemen's tiers of seats. Dust choked the throat of Marcus, dimmed his vision. The veteran's sword hammered on the steel of his armor. But Marcus was seeing only the faces of the tax gatherer, of Gaius, of the steward. All those who stood between him and his pitiful security. The roaring of the bloody Arena did not reach him.

Suddenly his opponent was down. The veteran's visor came off. Despairing eyes looked up at him pleadingly. Above Marcus a nobleman laughed harshly. He jingled some gold pieces. Then he pointed his thumb downward.

With a convulsive motion, Marcus thrust with his sword. He was looking away from the veteran's pleading eyes. The gold pieces fell into his outstretched hand. Then he departed the Arena.

Stripped of his armor, again in his

ragged clothes, Marcus arrived at his forge.

"Julia! Julia, my sweet!" Marcus cried, opening the door. "See! We now have money! Much money! Three gold pieces!"

Old Calvus stood facing him with sadness in eyes.

"Quick, Calvus! Go to the doctor! He will come now!"

Old Calvus put his hand on Marcus' shoulder.

"Marcus, my friend," he whispered, "it's too late."

Marcus flung himself beside the low bed. "Julia—my sweet—I tried——" His hand touched the bundled baby tenderly.

"She did not know when the little son died," said Calvus' wife.

Marcus bowed his head and walked slowly to his shop. Old Calvus came to his side.

"My poor, poor friend," murmured old Calvus.

"Poor? I've lost all I loved because I was poor. A week ago I could have saved them. All my life I've been a fool. Money is all that counts. It's easy to get money!" Marcus was almost screaming the words. "All you have to do—is kill! *Kill!*"

MARCUS, the blacksmith of Pompeii, seemed no longer a kindly man. Surely, he was no longer a peaceable one. In those first days and weeks in the great Arena, an insane blood lust must have replaced the love taken from his life.

Death dripped often from his thrusting sword. There came the day of the emperor's birthday games. Many went to Rome for these, but the Arena of Pompeii had the mightier attraction. With sword, and trident and net, Marcus, the Smith, the Champion of Pompeii, had become the foremost contender of the empire.

The posters read: "Marcus, the Smith, the Champion of Pompeii, returns to fight The Wolf, Champion of the Legions."

That was one of the greatest contests ever witnessed in that Arena. When it was finished, "The Wolf of the Legions" lay at the feet of Marcus. The Editor, among the nobles, had judged the reaction of the blood-hungry crowds. The Wolf was dead.

Marcus entered the anteroom wearily. His prize purse was stuffed in his belt. He removed the wreath of laurel from his head. Gaius Tanno himself rushed forward. Marcellus, another friendly noble, accompanied Gaius.

"I knew this god of war when he was a blacksmith!" enthused Gaius. "To-day he wins me a thousand gold pieces!"

Marcellus touched the mighty shoulders. "Magnificent, by Jupiter! What a specimen, eh, Gaius?"

"The Wolf was nearly a match for him," said Gaius.

"He was a good fighter," observed Marcus. "Condemned to die."

"I'll never forget The Wolf's face when he saw death coming," laughed Marcellus. "I never saw anything so funny in my life."

"Let's find Petronius," said Gaius. "He owes me five hundred."

"And me a thousand," said Marcellus, tossing his cloak to a Greek slave with a scholarly face. "Wait here, Leaster."

Leaster, the slave, was watching Marcus. As Marcellus and Gaius went out, Marcus was staring somberly at the laurel wreath.

"So even the great Marcus cannot yet kill with a light heart," mused Leaster aloud.

"A light heart?" said Marcus bitterly. Then he added with some bravado, "Kill or be killed, what's it matter?"

"I'm sorry for you," said Leaster.

"What? Sorry for *me?* You? A slave?"

"Every man is a slave. I—you—Marcellus, my master."

"He is a very rich man," said Marcus.

"Yet slave to his appetites and vices," said Leaster. "I am as free as he—and happier. Money doesn't matter."

"You're a fool. Money is all that matters. Without money, who cares for a man—who'll listen to him? They listen to me."

"And who will care for you?" said Leaster, gently.

Marcus stared at him, then replied harshly, "No one!"

Attendants and fellow gladiators greeted Marcus in the washroom. Cleon, the slave procurer, stood in the doorway.

"Marcus!" he exclaimed. "What a fight!"

Marcus surveyed the slave dealer with studied coldness.

"You remember me, don't you?" said Cleon. "You saved my life."

"I don't save lives," remarked Marcus, grimly.

"But surely you haven't forgotten Cleon, the slave dealer? In your forge? The Scythian prisoner would have killed me."

"I remember. I wonder why I stopped him."

"Why should you scorn me, my friend?" said Cleon. "Aren't we in the same business, furnishing amusement?"

"I risk my life, Cleon. You buy and

Marcus hurled him from the shop door.

sell poor wretches. By Pallux, compared to you I'm a holy man."

"You'll never be an old one," sneered Cleon. "Brains survive."

"A rat lives longer than a lion," said Marcus. "I wouldn't have your dirty work—not to save my life."

THE gladiator sank to a bench to remove his greaves. Near him was a little heap of The Wolf's belongings.

Marcus said to a fellow, "Did you see that backhand stroke?"

"Well, The Wolf's done his last trick," said the other fighter.

An attendant spoke. "I wonder if The Wolf's cub knows any of his tricks yet?"

"The cub?" exclaimed Marcus. "What are you talking about?"

The attendant pulled aside The Wolf's cloak. A chubby boy of six or so lay there asleep. He awoke and looked at Marcus. He was Flavius, the son of The Wolf.

"Where is my father?" he said to Marcus.

"There's a question for you, Marcus!" roared a gladiator.

Others in the washroom laughed with ribald humor. Marcus leaped to his feet suddenly, roaring with rage.

"Take your dirty grinning faces out of here, you jackals!"

The room cleared quickly. The boy Flavius stood close to a wall.

"Why aren't you at home with your mother?" said Marcus.

"Oh, my mother's dead," said the boy. "She died in Gaul."

Then he added, "My father's the best fighter in the Legion. He had a little trouble. But he's going to win this fight and then everything will be all right."

Marcus let his sword slide to the floor. He rubbed his knees.

"What happens to people when they die?"

"I know," quavered the boy, "on account of my mother having died. They go down to the River Styx. A ferryman takes them across the river where all the spirits are."

"You're a soldier's son," said Marcus, slowly. "You don't have to be babied. Your father has gone to join his comrades across that river."

The boy Flavius looked at him steadily, his eyes unwinking.

"I'm not going to cry," he said with determination. "But he said he would win this fight and I could unbuckle the winner's sword."

Marcus said, "Come here. How would you like to be my son?"

The boy walked into his arms. Marcus drew Flavius to him tenderly.

A FEW days later, Marcus walked with Flavius into the Market Place of the Slaves. The Janitor was auctioning a tall young negress. He was telling how the girl was a real bargain. He said she was as strong as a man and sweet as a child.

Other slaves, white and black, crouched in the market cells. An older matron, heavily bejeweled, felt experimentally of the slave girl's arms. She ran her hands over the girl's legs and shook her head dubiously.

The Janitor was a shrewd auctioneer. He suddenly pointed out this slave girl was a wonderful hairdresser. The rich woman smiled at that. A crowd was milling in front of the auction block.

A great shout went up. "Marcus! The champion comes!"

The Janitor immediately stopped his attempt to sell the slave girl. He came bowing, rubbing his hands, asking what he could do for the great Marcus.

Marcus smiled. He said then he had come to find a tutor for his son. The Janitor said he had a Greek who spoke four languages and had been with one family for twenty years.

Flavius ran eagerly to the barred door of a slave cell.

"Hail, Greek!" The boy pattered, with a pleased smile.

"Hail, Roman!" replied the slave, with hopeful cheerfulness.

Marcus, beside the Janitor, peered into the cell.

"I remember you," said Marcus. "You're Leaster, the slave who said, 'Money doesn't matter.' You served one family for twenty years. What are you doing here?"

Leaster said simply, "I dropped my master's cloak in the mud."

Marcus drew Flavius aside and said, "Well, my son?"

"Oh, I *like* him, father."

Marcus looked at Leaster with a slight smile.

"So—money doesn't matter, eh?" He tossed Leaster his cloak.

Thus it came about that Leaster, the Greek slave, a few months later helped Marcus don his armor for the contest with Murmex. The great gladiator had been brought from Carthage for this encounter.

CHAPTER III.

THE BEATEN MARCUS.

MURMEX, the gladiator of Carthage, was a braggart. In the anteroom of the Pompeiian Arena, his voice was the loudest. Leaster, the slave, tightened the shoulder straps of Marcus.

"Leaster," said Marcus suddenly, "in these recent months have you noticed any difference in the way I fight?"

"You seem to grow more and more careful, master," said Leaster.

"You're right, Leaster. Out there in the Arena, I think 'Suppose I'm killed; what would become of my boy, Flavius?' "

"Don't have such thoughts, master. Your fate is with the gods."

"What gods do you pray to, Leaster?" quizzed Marcus.

"Master, I—I can believe in none I ever heard of."

"Nor I," declared Marcus, rising.

Murmex strode forward, carrying his helmet. He swaggered.

"So this is the great Marcus? Well, I'm Murmex of Carthage. I'm going to win, you know?"

"I didn't know it was settled yet," smiled Marcus.

"There will be wailing in your house to-night," bragged Murmex. "The gods are on my side."

In the Arena seats the crowd roared. Again it roared, a little later—roared, and spoke. The mighty Marcus lay in the bloody dust.

"A good fight!" "Too short!" "Where was Marcus's backhand stroke?" "You didn't see him parry it!" "Anyway, he has been spared!" "Murmex, the new champion!"

In the anteroom, the crowd surged around Murmex. The gladiator from Carthage wore the laurel wreath with greater swagger than before. His voice was loud.

"I told you I'd win!" he roared.

The ratlike Cleon burst into the room.

"Congratulations, Murmex! Hail to the new champion!"

Cleon's small eyes narrowed upon the stricken man coming into the room. The right arm of Marcus dangled uselessly. Leaster pulled the armor from the riven shoulder. Marcus lifted his head.

"Tell me the truth, Leaster."

"The tendons are cut, master," said Leaster, slowly. "A year—perhaps two—before this arm will again wield a sword."

"I was too careful," said Marcus.

Cleon stood near with a sneering smile across his thin lips.

"So the lion's day is over," he said.

"Still I don't envy the rat," said Marcus with set teeth.

"You may," jeered Cleon, "in days to come. I've looked forward to this. How often have you said you wouldn't do my dirty work, not even to save your life?"

"And I still say so!"

"Will you say so when your son is hungry?"

The huge barbarian was helpless. The guards leaped upon him.

Marcus jerked his shoulder under the pain of the bandaging.

"Makes you wince, doesn't it?" said Cleon. "I always have work for men like you—if they're not squeamish. Come and see me when you're ready to bring slaves from Libya."

Cleon rubbed his hands suggestively, and went out with a smile.

MARCUS had said he would not. But he remembered, too well, the days in which he might have had the money for Julia and her dead baby son. Now there was Flavius. He filled that aching place in Marcus's breast.

Marcus cast aside nearly all of the great pride that had been his. He went to Cleon. Now he was in the slave barracoon among the thorn bushes at the edge of the desert.

Whips of the overseers were cracking. A towering Berber fiercely resisted all efforts to lock him in a yoke. A little boy was standing by, crying bitterly.

Marcus looked toward the struggling group.

"You'll kill the man!" he shouted. "Wait! Cleon won't pay for dead slaves! Tell him—tell all of them, if they make any more trouble, their sons will go to the Arena!"

In his own language, the Berber was told. The giant ceased to struggle. He pulled on the yoke. Then he was permitted to hold his son in his arms.

SOME days later, back in Pompeii, Marcus thought of this scene. He was holding Flavius in his arms in the market place. Around them, the city sparkled white within its walls. Back of the metropolis old Vesuvius slumbered peacefully, plumed with steam against the blue Italian sky.

The hands of Flavius were filled with toys. Below, a gay pleasure barge was rowed across the bay, its passengers singing. Rich men in robes rode in litters. A peddler was crying, "Melons from Africa!"

The eyes of Marcus were dreamy. Donkeys laden with treasure were being herded through the dust. Worshipers in white robes, and in the rags of poverty, were clustered on the stairs of the Temple of Jupiter.

All around them, citizens were discussing the Arena fights. One said the present champion was as dead as Jupiter. Another that the slaves to fight the wild beasts were no good. A coffle of slaves came shuffling along.

Marcus thought grimly of the batch of slaves he had brought. But he was looking at the pleasure barge, at the gala-robed rich men in litters. He glanced past the vendors crying their wares. His eyes were fixed upon the gorgeous white house of the rich man, Gaius Tanno.

Flavius complained of hunger. Marcus took him toward a wine shop where porridge would be served. Leaster, the Greek slave, followed them closely. He was greatly attached to the boy.

The proprietor ladled out a great bowl of porridge for the boy. Marcus and Leaster had mugs of wine before them. A bent old Wise Woman in filthy rags shuffled in from the street. She paused at the table and whined she would tell their fortune.

"I have made my own future, mother," smiled Marcus.

"No one does that," said the Wise Woman, and limped on to a table where two soldiers were throwing dice.

A ship's captain sat at a table near Marcus. He arose and came over. The captain said there would be a favoring wind at dawn and advised Marcus to get aboard early.

Flavius had been nodding sleepily over his porridge. He awoke to plead, suddenly, "Father, are you going away again?"

"I'm going to Judea to bring back horses," said Marcus. "Some day, we'll live in a big house. We'll be rich!"

Cleon, the slave dealer, came bustling in.

"Marcus!" he scowled. "Men who work for me can't idle in wine shops. I've got orders to give you."

"Not me," said Marcus, calmly. "I've made a contract on my own account."

"What?" snapped Cleon. "With the money I paid you? Then you must let me in on it."

Marcus leaned forward. "Listen, little man. Some day you'll take orders from me. Some day I'll be head of the Arena!"

"You? Ha! Your fighting days are over! You only brag!"

"My fighting days aren't over," said Marcus, rising.

Cleon drew back hastily, mumbling. He went out quickly.

"Master," said Leaster, "you didn't mean that? You want to be head of the Arena?"

"Why not, Leaster? Men like Cleon grow rich in safety. Why shouldn't I sit behind the scenes where the money is?"

"You'd be held responsible for the slaughter of helpless slaves?"

"What does it matter whether I do it, or another?"

"It would matter, Marcus, to your conscience."

The broken body of his wife was in his great arms.

AT the table of the gambling soldiers, a mêlée broke out. Apparently, there had been cheating. One man seized the helpless Wise Woman by the shoulders and shook her angrily. He called her a witch and ordered her away.

The other soldier complained the Wise Woman had said he could not win. Marcus strode over to the table. He scooped up the dice. Then he rolled them and showed they were crooked.

The cheat was infuriated. He knocked the Wise Woman roughly to the floor. Marcus gripped the cheat's shoulder with one hand. The man whirled from his feet. Marcus hurled him from the shop door. The man fell in the dust, slavering oaths.

Leaster got the Wise Woman to a bench. Her eyes were closed. When Marcus returned, Leaster said she was a woman of his race. She lived in the Street of the Fullers. Marcus took the old woman in his arms.

The Street of the Fullers was a straggling byway of the beggars, the more humble workers, the very poor. It was a startling contrast to the broad avenues of the rich citizens.

In the Wise Woman's hut were only a

table, a wooden stool and a shelf of brick filled with dirty straw. Marcus laid the woman gently on the straw. The kindly Flavius had brought his bowl of porridge. As the Wise Woman revived, he gave her some of the porridge.

The starving woman gulped greedily. Marcus placed two gold pieces on the table. He told Flavius they must leave, and started out.

"You're a kind man," mumbled the Wise Woman, "though you try hard not to be."

Marcus turned and stared at her. She spoke again.

"But you are going on a journey---I can see. It is the turning point in your life. You will be offered the chance to choose between success and failure. You will have to be careful, if you are to know which you are choosing."

"I shall know," declared Marcus, confidently.

"And the son—who is no son——" said the Wise Woman.

"How could she know that?" Marcus murmured to Leaster.

"She's like the wise woman of ancient Greece, master."

"The child will meet with a great man," said the Wise Woman.

"Where?" said Marcus.

"In Judea," she replied.

"But," he disputed, "my son is not going with me."

"Take him, Marcus, take him to the man—the greatest man—greater than any one yet knows——"

"The greatest man in Judea?"

"Yes," she said. "He will help the child when help is needed. And his spirit will direct the child."

"A great man to help him?" mused Marcus. "Success for me?"

"The ship won't sail without us?" quavered Flavius, overjoyed.

"No," said Marcus. "The ship is waiting. To take us to Judea—to find our fortunes."

CHAPTER IV.

GREATEST IN JUDEA.

ROMAN soldiers in gay uniform guarded the gray gates of Jerusalem. For all of Judea was at this time under the domination of Rome.

In contrast to the pomp of the soldiers of Caesar, poverty cluttered the streets inside the gates of the drab city. Bedouins moved with stately steps, their desert *abbas,* or cloaks, gray with sand. Water carriers entered the gates with goatskins damp and bulging. For water had to be brought from the wells for the houses of baked mud and brick which made up most of the city.

These houses were the humble neighbors of the costly temples and the edifices in which dwelt the Procurator of Rome, Pontius Pilate, and his aides.

Flavius clung to the hand of Marcus as they entered the great gate of Jerusalem. The small boy from Pompeii was wide-eyed with wonder. He gazed longingly at small boys playing in the dusty street.

Marcus had told him they were going to see the greatest man in all Judea: Pontius Pilate.

At this moment, Pontius was seated in his office. This was an anteroom of the judgment chamber, where he administered Roman justice to the people of Judea.

Pontius scowled and threw a scroll upon the table. His secretary stood close by.

"The insolence of these desert tribes!" he complained. "And Herod encourages them!"

"Would he dare, excellency?" said the secretary.

"He has dared. He encourages their raids—and profits by them. This chief of the Ammonites. He'd never dare so much without the secret help of Herod."

"Since Herod works against you secretly, can you not do the same to him?" suggested the secretary.

. . . the blacksmith swung his blade with the strength and fury of a maniac.

"I would," announced Pontius, "if I could find a man——"

The secretary said quickly, "Your excellency, a horse dealer from Pompeii is waiting to see you."

"What? A horse dealer? Who would be Procurator of Judea? Riots and plots against Rome—the people against each other—and then horse dealers clamor at my threshold! Who is he?"

"His name is Marcus. He was once a gladiator—the champion."

"Hm-m-m!" mused Pontius. "I've heard of him. Send him in."

Marcus entered with Flavius beside him.

"Excellency!" saluted Marcus, raising his right hand.

A twitch at his shoulder, and the small Flavius also saluted. Pontius looked perplexed at the presence of the child.

"Well," he said, "what do you want?"

MARCUS produced two scrolls from a flat case at his belt. Pontius extended his hand. Marcus passed the scrolls to Flavius. The boy placed them in the hands of Pontius. As he did this, the boy bowed and murmured, "Excellency."

Pontius was clearly puzzled. He glanced from the child to the scrolls.

"Hm-m-m!" he said. "Permission for Marcus, dealer from Pompeii, to cross the Jordan to buy horses. Why, this is only a routine matter! Why come——"

Pontius's eyes seemed compelled to

regard Flavius. The boy's face was upturned raptly. Pontius looked at him intently. Then he took up a pen.

"Your son, Marcus, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Marcus, eagerly. "He is Flavius. He's seven."

"Very interesting," said Pontius. "My good man, what is all this? There's nothing important in these papers. You insist on seeing me. You bring a child, and you both watch me as though you expected me to burst into flames."

"I'm sorry, excellency," said Marcus, humbly. "I thought it would do no harm to help the prophecy come true."

"Prophecy? What prophecy are you talking about?"

"It was prophesied the greatest man in Judea would help my son. How could you help him if you didn't see him?"

"I see," mused Pontius. "You're giving aid to the fates?"

"Well, if you want a thing well done, do it yourself."

Pontius laughed, "And even fate needs an overseer? Well, I've seen your son and I won't forget him."

"Thanks, excellency," said the boy Flavius.

"You know, Marcus," said Pontius, with eyes twinkling, "a man like you would be useful to some one who could employ him?"

"Any one," said Marcus, "can employ me for a price."

Pontius said slowly, "So you've come here to buy horses?"

"Yes, excellency."

"A pity to pay for them, when they could be had for nothing."

"How?" exclaimed Marcus.

"Oh, just an idea. Unfortunately, it would require my help. And that, in my official capacity, I could not give. It would make trouble for me. There's a chief of the Ammonites who annoys me—the horses I am speaking of belong to him."

"He has many fine horses, this Ammonite chief?" said Marcus.

"Wonderful steeds. And he is rich. He has a treasure. I believe it is in gold. Not enough to make it worth Rome's while, but a sum you and I would be well content to share."

"To share? You mean——"

"A sudden foray," suggested Pontius. "Desperate men—led by the sort of man I think you are——"

"I have no men to lead, excellency."

"The dungeons here are crowded with just the men for such a lawless enterprise. Well, the interview is ended. Good-by."

Marcus arose slowly, and Flavius came to join him.

"One thing more," said Pontius. "It has been prophesied that four nights hence a horse dealer will sleep at an inn in the village of Amman, across the Jordan."

"I believe in prophecies," said Marcus. "And in you."

"As an official, I shall have forgotten you in an hour," said Pontius. "But as a private citizen, I shall look forward with interest on your return to Jerusalem. Good-by."

THE small inn at Amman, across the Jordan, was a wretched building of mud bricks, built around four sides of a court. Horses and donkeys were tethered in this court. The place was piled with sacks, bales and saddlebags. The air reeked with the odor of animals and of human sweat.

The only light came from a fire of small sticks in the middle of the court. Marcus sat there with Leaster, the slave. Leaster was putting more sticks on the fire.

Marcus sprang suddenly to his feet, listening. For this village was Amman, in the country of the Ammonites, the enemies of Rome, of Pontius Pilate. From outside the low wall had come a scuffling noise of softly moving feet.

"Go and see if Flavius is asleep," commanded Marcus.

"I am Flavius, son of Marcus," said the boy, quietly.

Leaster arose and went to one of the cubicles at the side of the court. Marcus gave a half-smothered, impatient groan. He dropped beside the fire, his chin in his hands.

Marcus hardly seemed aware of the skulking, huge man who crept from the shadows and stood near him. Suddenly the man spoke and demanded to know if Marcus was the horse dealer who believed in prophecies.

By that strange question, Marcus knew Pontius had kept his word. This stranger could be no other than a convict from the Ergastulum. Marcus said he was the horse dealer. The man said he was Burbix, and he had two score men waiting outside the wall.

"Your men," swaggered Burbix, "if you can handle us."

One hand of Marcus gripped Burbix's tunic. He rocked the convict's head with an open-handed blow on the jaw. Burbix grinned slowly. "That was all right," he said.

Marcus then directed Leaster to wait for him, with Flavius, at the village of Eleah, close to Jericho.

Marcus turned and placed his hand gently on the head of Flavius.

"I can do it, son," he said gently. "All that I owe you—everything I've promised—this venture means all that."

Taking only his sword, Marcus joined Burbix in the courtyard. Burbix walked toward the gateway. Outside waited two score of the worst cutthroats Marcus had ever seen.

"So!" he growled. "This is my army? A fine lot of beasts! And in a fight, you'll all run like rats!"

"It's a lie!" rapped Burbix. "We *want* to fight!"

Marcus whirled on him. "Keep your mouth shut! I'm talking! I was once Marcus, the gladiator. If any man doubts I'm your leader, speak up. We're going to raid the Ammonites. They've got horses. You are on foot. They're fighters. I don't know what you are. But you'll come back riding—or you won't come back."

THE convicts could fight—viciously, mercilessly. Their first onslaught on the Ammonites yielded mounts for all. Their rapaciousness carried them to daredevil extremes. And now they were riding, driving a herd of loose horses of the finest Arabian stock.

Marcus viewed with distinct disgust some of the loot they had taken. For the convicts had seized rugs, copper, brass pots and miscellaneous weapons.

Marcus and Burbix were caked with dust and sweat. But they smiled at each other. Burbix had taken as his own loot a hooded falcon.

"A good piece of work, that last night," commended Marcus.

"And a bad day for the Ammonites," grinned Burbix.

"These men of yours—they don't want to go back to Jerusalem?"

"They would be much safer in hell," declared the convict.

"They'd better scatter then," instructed Marcus. "We'll pick up villagers to bring the horses in."

"I'll be sorry to leave you, Marcus. You're a brave chief."

"You're not going to."

"But I can't go back. I know too many jailers."

"You're going with me to Jerusalem," smiled Marcus. "And back to Pompeii. I'll fix it. You're a good man, Burbix."

"Nobody ever told me that before," grinned Burbix.

"I trust you," said Marcus, eying him steadily.

Burbix was thoughtful, then he said simply, "You can."

"You're in charge, Burbix. I'm riding ahead. The men can drift away with the horses they're riding."

"And," cautioned Marcus, "guard these packhorses well."

With his bare hands he was resisting the attempt to break the locks.

"Think I'm a fool? I know what's on 'em."

"Then I'll await you in Eleah, Burbix."

Marcus galloped on to Eleah. There he was greeted by Leaster at the door of a woman who had been kindly.

"Leaster!" hailed Marcus. "I've done it! We're rich! And it's only the beginning! You'll be tutor to a rich man's son! Where's Flavius?"

"Master! Don't! He can't hear you!"

Marcus stood frozen. Unutterable anxiety clouded his eyes. Then he rushed into the house. The old woman, Esther, crouched beside a mattress. Flavius, the boy, lay there. He was as white as the cold sleep of death.

"It happened yesterday, master," whispered Leaster. "Flavius mounted the horse of a traveler. It threw him. He has not moved or spoken since."

"This can't be," murmured Marcus. "Not again! Oh, not again! I will not *let* it be. I'll ride with him to Jerusalem where there are doctors, the best!"

"On such a ride his feebly beating heart would stop forever, master," said Leaster. "It is scarcely beating now."

CHAPTER V.

THE DARKEST HOUR.

MARCUS, smith of Pompeii, had had his dark hours. But of all, this, perhaps, was the darkest. Once he'd had gold pieces. And they had failed to save his wife and son. Now he had gold, much gold, and the son who had come to him by the blood of the child's father on his hands hovered on the brink of eternity.

In his heart at this moment, Marcus was cursing all gold.

"Flavius! Flavius!" he cried impotently. "I've brought you everything—happiness, riches—it's all for you——"

He lifted his clenched fists to heaven in despair.

"What gods are there to call upon?"

The street door opened. A young and comely woman stood there. Excitement blazed in her shining eyes.

"I am Martha," she announced. "The Master comes! He is passing through on His way to Jerusalem! Bring the child! Make haste!"

"What—what does she mean?" questioned Marcus, dazedly.

"A young man, a wandering teacher," said Leaster. "All of the people call Him Master and Lord."

"Well, what could He do?"

Martha smiled at him as if he were a child. "He brings help when help is needed. He makes the blind see—and the lame walk. Oh, make haste and ask His help."

Marcus gazed at her unbelievingly. Her manner compelled him. He picked up the slight form of Flavius. As if the boy were of no weight, he strode through the dusty street toward an olive orchard.

A group of peasants clustered under the trees. A peasant saw the urge in Marcus's face. He made way for him, put his hand on Marcus's shoulder.

"I am Simon, friend," said the peasant. "Be of good cheer. He has said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me.' Those are His words."

These followers of the Teacher were the poorest, the most humble folk. Marcus glanced at the man whom they surrounded. The Teacher, he saw, was a man of about his own age, possibly thirty. His clothing was merely the flowing robe of the country, of the cheapest white cloth.

THE Teacher was speaking. His voice was low. The peasants seated around had the awed attitude of children. They had all the appearance of simple folk who long had awaited the coming of a Master who might lead them from their misery—indeed, who might free them from the toils inflicted by Rome.

But Marcus saw no great power about this Teacher. The words He spoke were strange, in parables.

"He who would save his life must lose it."

A rich man came into the group. The Teacher smiled sadly upon him. He said to this rich man, "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor."

Strange words indeed. Not at all in keeping with the ambition of Marcus. But now Marcus felt his soul strained by the danger to his adopted son. He must try, yes, he must try.

Marcus kneeled in the little cleared space. He laid Flavius on the ground, very carefully. The Teacher's followers moved back a little. Marcus looked at

"Marcus! Have mercy on my son!"

the still, white face of the boy. For himself, perhaps he did not believe.

As he had often said, he had no gods. In embittered grief he had turned to gold as the panacea for all human ills.

When Marcus knelt before this man they called Master, he scarcely saw Him. His eyes were on the child. Then the Smith of Pompeii looked up into a calm, shining face. Something seemed to let go in his own soul. Anguish and despair faded from him. Marcus was once more the simple, kindly man he was meant to be.

He said simply, "Master—Lord—have mercy on my son."

The Teacher smiled upon the unconscious boy.

"Arise—and walk," He said.

Marcus still was kneeling. A ripple ran through the crowd. The boy, Flavius, had obeyed the words. Old Simon smiled as he watched Marcus and his son. The Teacher moved away. Flavius walked after Him. Marcus enfolded the boy in his arms.

"Flavius! My son!" Marcus looked at Simon. "What does the Teacher require of me? I'll give Him as much money as He wants——"

"He won't take money," said Simon.

"Whatever then a man can do, I'll do for Him," insisted Marcus. "What does He want? He's poor——"

"Poor?" smiled Simon. "He's the richest man in the world."

WITH his son and Leaster, Marcus went on to Jerusalem. He was mystified over the manner of his son's cure. Surely, there must be something he could do for this strange, wandering Teacher?

Then for two days, Marcus was unable to see Pontius Pilate. The secretary of Pontius concealed him in the palace. This morning, Marcus said to the secretary, "I must see Pontius. I've hidden two days like a thief."

"You may be glad I concealed you," said the secretary. "Luckily, no one has seen you. A messenger from Herod arrived last night. Herod demands the punishment of the men who raided the Ammonites."

"Well," said Marcus, "let me get out of town. Those horses——"

The secretary interrupted with a gesture of resignation.

"The horses are waiting for me," insisted Marcus. "Let me give Pontius my accounting of the treasure——"

"You'll see him when the trial is over."

"Whose trial is it?" said Marcus, with little interest.

"A man accused of treason. They say he meant to make all men follow him."

And at this moment, Pontius Pilate sat on his dais of authority. The hall was packed with an angry crowd. A slave carried a silver basin of water and a napkin to Pontius.

Pontius arose and proclaimed loudly:

"Then be ye all witnesses to this!" He dipped his hands in the basin. "I am innocent of the blood of this just person. I have washed my hands of it!"

Drying his hands, he walked from the hall into his anteroom.

Marcus was alone in the room Pontius entered. Pontius was staring at his hands, as if he feared there might be blood upon them. He rubbed them over his eyes. Then he looked at Marcus.

"Ah, the prophetic horse dealer," he murmured. "A successful journey?"

"The treasure of the Ammonites is great," said Marcus. "Will you send for your secretary and see that I have divided fairly?"

"You won't cheat me, I know," said Pontius wearily.

"No, excellency. You've done more for my son and me than any man—than any man can thank you for."

"What have I done?" mused Pontius. Then his words became filled with terror. "What have I done?"

Marcus exclaimed, "Your excellency! What perturbs you?"

"I—I'm not myself," said Pontius, hoarsely. "I have been forced to condemn a man. I found no fault with him. But I must try to keep the peace. Violence, unreason, hatred—let men wallow in the quicksand they have made of life. Pin your faith to gold, Marcus."

"I chose that long ago," said Marcus.

"You're wise. You must leave Jerusalem with your loot at once. I'll contrive delay of Herod's demand until you are out of reach, if you mean to keep your share of the treasure."

Gray ashes showered upon the boat like hot, silvery snow.

"I'll keep it," vowed Marcus. "I've killed men and driven slaves. I've raided, and robbed, and lied, trying to get money. Now I have enough to feel secure, to make my son safe. Thanks to you, I'll be a rich man, some day."

"Take care," urged Pontius. "There's tumult in the city. Mobs turn quickly to looting. Guard your gold carefully."

"After all I've done to get it, neither god nor man shall take it from me."

BUT Marcus discovered eluding the mobs was not so easy. Shortly after his interview with Pontius, Marcus and Burbix found they were being closely pursued. They were driving the donkeys laden with gold. The mob appeared near them in the street.

"We must get away from this mob," warned Burbix.

Marcus motioned toward a narrow alley. Burbix drove the donkeys into concealment. Marcus himself stood at the alley entrance.

"What's happening?" he said to a passing donkey driver.

"The mob goes with the condemned men to the executions," said the driver.

Dust arose in stifling clouds. Shouting, cursing men and women streamed by. An old man was pushed to one side and fell almost at Marcus's feet. The old man lifted his eyes, staring at Marcus.

"You?" he wailed. "You, Marcus, could have saved Him!"

The old man was Simon, the peasant. Marcus stared a moment, then he understood.

"It is He? The Teacher who saved my son?"

"Yes," said Simon. "They will crucify Him."

The hand of Marcus whipped to his sword.

"You said you'd do anything," urged Simon. "You have a sword."

Marcus hesitated. "One man alone? What can I do?"

Old Simon flung out his arms. A great, roughly constructed cross was being borne on the shoulders of a bending man. The crowd around this instrument of execution was a clamoring mob. Marcus saw that these were the subjects of Herod. Pontius Pilate had feared to offend them too greatly.

Old Simon said, "You can die for Him!"

But Burbix rushed from the alley. He pulled at Marcus's arm and warned him again they were in danger of losing the gold they had stolen from the Ammonites. Marcus had not taken his eyes from the slowly moving cross.

He knew now, irrefutably, that the Teacher who had saved the life of his son was on His way to die on that cross. But he shrugged his shoulders and turned back into the alley.

Old Simon gave a great cry of grief. He warned Marcus that some day his world would tumble about him.

But within the hour, Marcus was riding from Jerusalem with his son in his arms. His caravan of gold passed through the hills where three stark crosses were outlined against the pale sky.

When Flavius gazed at these with childish curiosity, Marcus cupped the boy's chin and covered his eyes.

"Don't look back, Flavius. Look ahead. Think how happy we're going to be. We're safe now. We're going to be rich.'

Marcus watched his caravan of gold. Surely, this tragedy in the hills of Judea could not affect him. It was most unfortunate the condemned man had saved his son, but he could not have opposed the mob.

He estimated the amount of his stolen treasure. Then he turned and rode away from Calvary without a backward glance.

CHAPTER VI.

A SWORD FOR HIS SON.

THE new house of Marcus, in Pompeii, was the greatest in the city. Well it befitted the one-time blacksmith who had risen to power.

The house was a veritable palace. It was said its appointments and its entertainments were equal to those of the emperor himself. For with the treasure of the Ammonites, Marcus had dealt shrewdly.

He now was a man of power. His ambition to become head of the Arena had been realized. Where he once had entered the lists as a humble novice, later to become the champion, he now ruled the sports of blood and death.

To-day he had bought from Crassus, the merchant, the finest blade of Damascus steel. The sword was a gift for his son, Flavius. And the blade was jeweled of hilt and scabbard, befitting the son of even a noble.

As he thought of that, Marcus smiled. For while Flavius never could be the son of a noble, his father had been secretly using his influence to another end. It was not impossible that Flavius might himself become a noble.

Of this ambition, Marcus had not spoken to his son. But he had paid six thousand gold pieces for that Damascus blade.

As Crassus departed after the sale, he

remarked that the whole city was looking forward to the games of the following day.

"It's going to be a good show," Marcus smiled. "My son is coming now, so be off with you."

"Good morning, father," said the tall Flavius. "What's Crassus been selling you now?"

Marcus pulled a cloak from the sword. Flavius picked it up.

"I never saw a finer weapon," he said. "What a dash you'll cut with it, father."

"My dashing days are over, Flavius," said Marcus, slapping his shoulder. "The sword is for you."

"Thank you, father," said Flavius, absently.

"Glad you like it, Flavius. It's for a special occasion. I have word an old friend is coming to Pompeii to see us."

"Who is it, father?"

"A man I haven't seen in many years. He laid the foundation for our fortune. You saw him once, but you wouldn't remember him."

"What's his name? Where did I see him?"

"In Jerusalem. His name is Pontius Pilate."

"Could that be the man whose voice I vaguely remember?"

Marcus spoke hastily. A slight frown creased his forehead.

"No, no! I've told you that was only a dream! There never was such a man!"

The former convict, Burbix, swaggered into the room.

"GREETINGS, Marcus—Flavius! The new Prefect is coming down to the Quadrangle. He wants to see the preparations for the games. He's afraid we don't do him credit."

"He is, is he?" shouted Marcus. "Leaster, my cloak."

Flavius was smilingly displaying his sword to Burbix.

"Jupiter, what steel!" said Burbix. "It would cut chains!"

"Could I cut through chains?" said Flavius, oddly.

"You might," laughed Burbix, "if you were fool enough to try."

Marcus said, "No use asking you to come down to the Arena with me, is there, Flavius?"

"Well—you know, father——" hesitated Flavius.

"That's all right, my boy. I've got bigger plans for you than to follow in my footsteps."

"Be sure to speak to the Prefect about the slaves we need for the fight tomorrow," said Burbix. "There's only a few condemned men in the jail. One man escaped."

"Another runaway slave?" growled Marcus. "Where do they all go? The Prefect will have to get me men."

"Father, must you——" Flavius started to protest.

Marcus interrupted pleasantly, "Now, my boy, we won't go over that again. Don't you fret how I make my money, and I won't worry how you spend it."

With a slap on the boy's shoulder, he went out with Burbix.

Flavius turned to Leaster, the Greek slave.

"You see, Leaster, it's useless. He'll never change. Come help me dress."

Leaster assisted him in silence.

"Clodia will be wondering what's become of me," said Flavius. "Oh, Leaster, I almost forgot. I've got a ship at last. The day for action is almost here."

"If only the danger for you were not so great," said Leaster.

"Ha! Only one thing worries me. Are you sure that island is free and untouched?"

"I am," said Leaster. "There's wealth, and no people to enslave. No Roman soldier has ever set foot upon it."

"When we go, will you come with us, Leaster?"

"Marcus will have need of me, after you're gone," he smiled.

"If I could only tell him the truth,"

said Flavius. "But he'd smash the whole thing, and I can't let him."

"Come," said Leaster. "I'll make sure the way is clear."

When Flavius emerged, he was wrapped in a slave's cloak, with a hood pulled over his head.

"I'll be back to-night," said Flavius. "Watch for me."

FOR the son of Pompeii's richest man, Flavius took a strange route. Above the city, he picked his way through the brush of a rocky slope. Hidden under the hilltop, the flicker of a fire showed the mouth of a cave.

A sentinel, by his garb a slave, stood before this concealed entrance. Suddenly, he gave a warning whistle. Behind him some thirty men crept from the cave. They were armed with clubs and knives.

A man the fugitives called Phoebus was their leader. The sentinel said to him, "No danger. It's the friend."

The cloaked and hooded Flavius greeted the sentinel and passed into the cave. Several women were there with the men. Two or three of the slaves exclaimed, "It's good to see you. We've missed you!"

"And what kept me away, do you think?" smiled Flavius. "Great news! I have a ship!" Then he looked around anxiously.

"Where's Clodia?"

A slave girl came shyly to him. He drew her close to his side.

"Some night, soon now," said Flavius, "you can reach the water front in twos and threes, unnoticed."

"How soon?" said one man, anxiously.

"After the games are over," Flavius stated, "the search will be relaxed. They won't need slaves for the Arena then. Before any one knows about the ship, we'll be beyond their reach."

Calpurnia, a fine-looking woman, clasped the arm of Phoebus.

"Then we'll be safe and free," she said with shining eyes.

"Friend," said Phoebus, "you've saved us from torture and from death. You've hidden us here, kept us fed and clothed, given us new hope. But do you really believe there's any place where runaway slaves can be safe?"

"But I know the place! That's where I'm taking you!"

"Where Rome can't reach us? Rome owns the world."

"This island is forgotten by the Empire. I'll lead you there. Have faith in me."

Then Flavius gripped the shoulder of the slave leader.

"You know I haven't seen Clodia for two whole days," he smiled.

Phoebus turned away, saying, "I shall keep watch for you."

"Soon we'll be together forever," murmured Clodia. "I won't be hiding and trembling. I'll be free."

"You'll be free, except for me," said Flavius, drawing her into his arms.

Clodia returned his embrace.

"It seems so strange," she said. "You risk disgrace and death to help us, yet none of us know who you are."

"I'm the man who loves you. Isn't that enough?"

"I suppose it is—since you're the man I love. But why do you do all this for slaves?"

"Clodia, did you ever try to recapture a dream? It's like a strain of music. Yet it slips away. I've been haunted by it since I was a child."

"But—what is it?"

"There was a voice—I can't hear the words—but I can see a man's face. He looks as though He pitied the whole blind and suffering world—that men could help each other to live, be happy."

"That's not a child's dream," said Clodia.

"My father says there was no such man. But I believe such a world could be. On our island we'll try to make it come true. No slavery, no flogging, no torture or agony——"

There was a sudden commotion. A runaway slave, smeared with blood from a flogging, staggered into the cave.

"I'm Drusus," he moaned. "Hide me—hide me!"

"Could the soldiers have followed you?" said Phoebus.

"No!" gasped Drusus. "I threw them off! I was condemned to the Arena. They said I was a thief, but I never stole. But Marcus must have more slaves for the games to-morrow."

Phoebus clenched his fists. "Marcus, the Butcher!" he cried.

Flavius was white-faced, stricken. He bowed his head without speaking.

ABOUT this time, Marcus was inspecting the barbarian slaves chained in the yard of the Arena. The Prefect stood beside him.

"It's singular so many have escaped," said the Prefect. "Some one is helping them."

Marcus shook his head. "What fool would risk death by torture for the sake of the slaves?"

Burbix appeared, saying, "Does the Prefect wish to inspect the Briton barbarians?"

"Yes," said Marcus. "Captives from Agricola's campaign."

"I wonder why Romans trouble with that wretched island?" said the Prefect. "After it's conquered, what good is it?"

They stood before a huge Briton, straining at his chains.

"Now here's a savage fellow," said Marcus. "A sort of chief. The Britons are great fighters. But I have only a handful of slaves to fight them."

Marcus turned facing the Prefect. Two great hands grabbed at his throat. Marcus whirled. The Briton barbarian freed one iron manacle to strike. Burbix shouted, but Marcus said sharply, "Keep off! I'll handle this!"

For a few seconds the two figures stood locked together. Then Marcus let go a grip on the Briton's right wrist. His fist drove into the prisoner's chin. The captive dropped without a sound.

"These Britons can't use their fists," grinned Burbix.

At this moment, a messenger hastened into the quadrangle.

"Your excellency! The ship with Pontius Pilate aboard has dropped anchor in the harbor!"

"What?" exclaimed Marcus. "Run to my house! Order the galley to be ready! I must go out to the ship and bring him ashore!"

"You? Pontius?" exclaimed the Prefect. "Why, he's a very distinguished man. I've never met him."

"Then," said Marcus, "give me the pleasure of dining with us to-day."

PONTIUS PILATE was lavish in his praise of the great house of Marcus. The Prefect, Aulus Martius, who was present during the dinner given for Pontius, was displeased and envious. While he played his cards to ingratiate himself with the powerful Pontius, he displayed clearly his ill feeling for Marcus.

At the first, Pontius had inquired for Flavius, his protégé. Marcus was much perturbed. He had sent a messenger through the city, but Flavius had not been found. The Prefect made the youth's absence the subject of critical remarks.

Leaster, the Greek slave, was greatly worried. Marcus repeatedly apologized for the absence of his son.

The men discussed the games for the following day. Marcus declared the Prefect must be responsible for their success or failure, as his soldiers had failed to catch the runaway slaves.

Shortly thereafter, Leaster came to his master's side. He informed him that a captain of the Prefect's guard had appeared. The Prefect excused himself, with the hope the message might concern the runaway slaves.

Marcus remarked grimly it was about time they had some good news. He said he must have fitting opponents for the barbarians.

As the Prefect went out, Leaster quietly informed his master that Flavius had returned and was in his room, changing his clothes.

Marcus said, "Tell him to hurry, Leaster, and then to come directly to me in the garden."

The garden of Marcus was a beautiful expanse. It seemed to be hung on the hill above the blue bay. Below it, a private wharf and house cared for the private galleys and other boats.

CHAPTER VII.

SON OF "THE BUTCHER."

MARCUS and Pontius were seated by the fountain in the garden.

"I can hardly wait to tell Flavius the news he is to go to Rome with you," said Marcus.

"May we have a favorable wind to-night," said Pontius. "You have done well indeed, Marcus. But you haven't changed. I can still hear you saying before you left Jerusalem with your treasure, 'Neither god nor man shall take it from me.' "

Flavius entered the garden and stood before them.

"Pontius, this is my son," said Marcus, proudly.

"I'm glad to see you, Flavius," greeted Pontius. "I suppose you don't remember me?"

"Yes, I remember you," said Flavius, slowly. "But there's something else I'd hoped to remember——"

The Prefect came bustling up. "Excellency, I'm sorry, but I must leave. Marcus, my soldiers have caught a slave who knows the hiding place of the runaway slaves. I'll make him talk."

"Splendid!" approved Marcus. "Now, Flavius——"

His son had stood as if frozen to the spot.

"Father—father—I must——"

Marcus paid no attention, but caught his arm.

"Pontius has gratified the greatest wish of my life," he said. "He's going to take you with him to Rome. You are to be a great man, my son. There's every chance you may be made a noble."

"But father I—I——"

"Everything I've ever hoped for you is in your grasp," Marcus hurried on. "You leave for Rome to-night."

Flavius pulled his arm from Marcus's hand. "No!" he shouted.

Marcus stared at him unbelievingly.

"Listen to me, father. There's no way I can spare you. I'm not going to Rome. I'm not going to do any of the things you've chosen."

"What do you mean?" demanded Marcus.

"You plan for me to be a noble—like the smiling Prefect, I suppose. He's gone to torture a man into betraying his fellows. A heartless swine like that——"

"Be silent!" thundered Marcus.

"Shall I keep silent forever in the face of injustice and brutality? The poor, the persecuted—some one must speak for them."

"I've heard such ideas, a long time ago," said Pontius, suddenly. "My boy, they're beautiful dreams—but only dreams."

Flavius faced the great Pontius. He said, "Was it a dream there was once a man of pity who said, 'Love your neighbor as thyself'?"

"There never was such a man, I tell you——" Marcus began.

Pontius spoke very quietly. "Don't lie to him, Marcus. There *was* such a man."

"What happened to Him?" said Flavius, eagerly.

"I crucified him," said Pontius, heavily.

"Now I remember," said Flavius, slowly. "The crosses on the hill."

"Where would I be if I'd listened to His teachings?" interrupted Marcus. "He said, 'Sell all you have and give to the poor.' You're a rich man's son."

"I don't want your money," declared Flavius.

"Then what could you give to the poor?" demanded Marcus.

"Myself," said Flavius, turning and walking away.

"Flavius! Come back here!" Marcus commanded.

"No, no, Marcus," said Pontius. "Let him go now. Come, see me aboard my ship. When the boy sees reason, send him to me in Rome."

"He's young," apologized Marcus. "He still believes in things."

"And you and I are wiser," said Pontius, sadly. "Perhaps."

DRUSUS, the newly arrived runaway slave, sat with the others around him. They were in the cave on the hill.

"Who is this friend," said Drusus, "who would help slaves?"

Phoebus said, "I don't know—but he plans to save us."

From the entrance, the sentinel cried loudly.

"Friend, what's happened? Phoebus!"

Flavius came rushing into the cave, crying, "Quick! Out of here! The soldiers have caught a slave who knows this place! They are torturing him and he will tell! You must scatter and try to reach the ship!"

The slave Drusus suddenly leaped forward, seizing Flavius.

"He's a spy!" shouted Drusus. "You called him friend! He's Flavius, the son of Marcus, the Butcher!"

Phoebus and the others cried out. They laid hands on Drusus.

"You're mistaken," said the girl, Clodia. "Deny it, friend."

"I've seen him with his father!" shouted Drusus. "The man who sent us to the Arena! Son of the Butcher! He can't deny it!"

"Friend, tell him no," appealed Phoebus.

"I am Flavius, son of Marcus," said the boy, quietly.

It seemed for a moment the slaves would tear him asunder. They cried, "Son of Marcus!" "Traitor!" "Our Friend!" "Father's spy!"

Flavius made himself heard at last.

"No, I've not betrayed you! Clodia! Do you believe I'm a spy?"

"No!" said the girl. "He's not a spy! He saved your life, and you know it, Phoebus!

"Sulla!" she added. "You know the penalty for helping slaves escape! He risked his life every day!"

"Don't believe it!" screamed Drusus. "Filthy spy——"

"Listen to me!" commanded Flavius. "No torture could force me to betray you! I'm no longer the son of Marcus! I'm one of you now! The ship is ready! To-morrow we'll be free!"

Clodia was sobbing in the boy's arms. She acclaimed her own faith in him. Her loyalty had its effect. Soon the others were crying for Flavius to lead them to freedom.

But even as they were speaking, the soldiers of the Prefect were creeping up the hill toward the cave.

AGAIN it was full afternoon, the afternoon of the great games. The market place was thronged with a populace robed for pleasure. Rich and poor, they came to pay their respects to the god Jupiter.

Before the low altar block stood the Augur, the priest. Two acolytes held a white lamb outstretched on the flat stone before him. The Augur made a gesture, struck with a gleaming knife. The lamb on the stone bleated only once.

Shouts of the holiday crowd arose. The Augur's hands lifted. They were bathed in scarlet. The priest lifted his eyes to the Temple of Jupiter. No doubt, he heard the mutterings of the crowd.

Many eyes were turned toward old Vesuvius. The mountain was crowned by an unusual pall of smoke. The thousands hurrying toward the Arena for the afternoon games of death and blood, wondered at this unusual manifestation. They questioned loudly.

In the face of this, with the blood of the sacrifice on his hands, the Augur gave reassurance. He declared Jupiter was favorable to the day of sport. That even Vesuvius was doing honor to the Prefect who had given such games to the people of Pompeii.

In the crowd, some were saying how Marcus would have thousands in profit from the afternoon of death. Women exulted over the beautiful day for the killings they hoped to witness. Already the crowd was drunk on its anticipation of blood.

Marcus sat on the balcony of his great house. His spirits were very low. Leaster appeared, but hesitated to speak.

"It's time you started for the Arena, master," he said at last.

"Yes," said Marcus, heavily. "See how Vesuvius is smoking. The old mountain hasn't looked like that in the memory of man."

"A special portent for your games, master."

Marcus seemed suddenly to have grown very old.

"I quarreled with Flavius, last night, Leaster. I was too hasty. I want to tell him so. Send him to me."

"He—he isn't here," said Leaster, nervously. "His bed is undisturbed. He must have left the house, last night."

"So?" said Marcus, with a forced smile. "He thinks I'm still in a rage. He's giving me a chance to cool down. He'll be back."

Burbix entered with a rush and a shout.

"Marcus! Good news! The whole company of runaway slaves was captured last night! They tried to get away by sea!"

Leaster smothered a cry with a hand over his mouth.

"Good news, indeed!" exulted Marcus. "Pompeii will see something to-day! Order my chariot! This will be a real show! My cloak!"

"Master——" Leaster could not go on.

"Real luck!" said Marcus. "This has more meaning than old Vesuvius smoking! Quick, Leaster, my cloak!"

Leaster came with the cloak quickly.

"Who are the captured ones?" he said fearfully.

"Who?" grunted Burbix. "Why slaves, of course! You don't suppose I would know their names!"

Leaster was in an agony of indecision. But Marcus was jovial.

"Come, Leaster, ride with me. Flavius is waiting to see me ride through the town—he'll hear the people cheer me. I'll show him I am not cast down."

In the street, the crowd cheered. A noble hailed the chariot.

"Have you heard of the runaways' capture, Marcus?"

"Of course," said Marcus heartily. "Fortune favors us."

CHAPTER VIII.

SON AND ROMAN.

BITTER, accusing voices sounded in one of the large cells off the Arena. Drusus, of all the captured runaways, was the most enraged. He declared Flavius had brought them all to their death, and that he had never been other than a spy.

Flavius, staying close to Clodia, could only reply that he had been trapped with the others. But even Phoebus asserted his belief that Flavius would be released.

Flavius maintained the others must believe him when he stood with them, facing death in the Arena. But Clodia protested. She told him he must try to save himself.

Flavius stubbornly insisted he would not let the others die believing he had betrayed them. His life was a poor price to pay, he declared.

A centurion, accompanied by two soldiers, tore Clodia from his arms. Outside, the roar of the crowds could be heard. With three other women, she was taken from the cell.

Leaster was in the quadrangle. The Greek slave stood with grief-filled eyes, as he saw the women being led away. Marcus was only a short distance away. Leaster had failed to muster the courage to tell his master the truth.

Now the loyal slave was shaken, for Marcus had requested him in a jovial spirit to see that the slaves' weapons were good, in order that they might put up their best battle.

Marcus was watching the increasing cloud of smoke over Mount Vesuvius. Walking to the Prefect's private box, Marcus remarked that even old Vesuvius was celebrating.

Then Leaster followed him to the box. Marcus frowned impatiently. The old Greek slave had been acting strangely.

Marcus demanded to know what he wanted.

"Master—Flavius—he's there—with the captured slaves!" panted Leaster. "He was caught, helping them escape!"

"*What!*" cried Marcus. "What reckless folly is this? Why, it's a capital crime——" He stopped, appalled by the very truth of it.

Leaster whispered frantically, "Master, it's the death penalty! The law of Rome is——"

Marcus straightened. He composed his writhing features. Then he turned to the Prefect.

"Your indulgence, excellency! Have patience a few moments! I'll return at once——"

Marcus hurried toward the cells of the slaves.

"I'll get him out!" he boasted to Leaster.

AT the other side of the Arena, the Briton prisoners were entering on shaggy ponies. The Prefect announced that those who fought well and lived, would be set free.

Marcus stared through the bars of the big slave cell.

"Flavius! What have you done? Why didn't you send for me?"

"You can't do anything for me, father."

"I'll get you out——"

"No, these men must die."

"It's the law of Rome that condemns them, Flavius."

"It condemns me, too. Good-by, father."

"No! no! no! The warder shall release you——"

Marcus hurried away along the corridor. In the Prefect's box, a woman was complaining.

"I came to see fighting, Aulus Martius," she said. "Is Marcus trying to make a fool out of you?"

"He takes too much upon himself," scowled the Prefect. Then he called to the soldiers, "Give the signal for the slaves to be driven out. Let the games begin."

The first trumpet blew. The crowd in the Arena roared.

Marcus was talking confidentially to the warder.

"The young man in the cell—he is no slave. Release him."

"No slave?" said the warder, amazed. "How did he get here?"

"Don't waste time! Release him! You shall have a hundred gold pieces——"

The trumpet sounded. The warder said, "These men are numbered. If one is missing——"

"Five hundred gold pieces—a thousand—release him, I say. He is my son!"

"I have a son, too. I can't risk my life."

"But you know I'm head of the Arena. I order you, release him!"

"I dare not, Marcus."

An iron door opened. The centurion shouted, "Ready there! Your turn's next! Quick, march!"

Flavius grasped his father's hand through the bars.

"Forgive me, father."

Marcus shouted to the centurion, "Stop! You there—stop!"

"What? Who are you?" demanded the centurion.

"Marcus, head of the Arena! Leave my son where he is!"

"You're crazy! I don't take orders from you——"

Marcus shook the iron bars. "There he is—there—that one. Don't take him. He's my son. I'll stop the games——"

The last slave came out and the door slammed.

"No one but the Prefect can stop the games," said the centurion.

"The Prefect——" gasped Marcus. He rushed toward the Arena.

AT the north end of the Arena, Flavius and the slaves were driven forth by the soldiers. Weapons were piled in the sand. Flavius was first to reach these. He shouted, "Come on, arm yourselves! We'll die fighting! Here's a sword! Take those shields!"

"Why should we fight?" moaned one slave.

"Do you want to be flogged to death like a slave, or die fighting like a man?"

The war horn of the barbarians pealed across the Arena. The slaves with shields stumbled forward. Flavius was in the center of the line.

"We'll take the first shock," declared Flavius.

"Not slaves, but men!" shouted his companions.

"A picturesque effect," said the Prefect in his box.

Marcus rushed in, seizing the Prefect's arm.

"Stop the games!" he shouted. "My son is there, among the slaves!"

"Why is he there? Was he helping slaves escape?"

"He's young—reckless—stop them from——"

"So, he has committed a crime—struck at Rome itself——"

"He's my son—my only son!"

"So at your command the law of Rome must be set aside?"

"He will be killed—my son——"

"If it were my own son," sneered the Prefect, "I would not stop the games!"

The barbarians charged across the Arena. The slaves braced themselves for the coming death strokes. Marcus leaped among the spectators.

"People of Pompeii!" he shouted. "I appeal to you! My son is there——"

The crowd yelled. "What does he say?" "Good old Marcus!" "Great show, Marcus!"

Death screams rolled from the Arena. Many slaves already were lying dead before the barbarians. Flavius was being beaten back by a huge Briton. He had been disarmed.

"My son!" screamed Marcus. "They'll kill him! Citizens, I've given you games; you've cheered me; this one thing I ask—— Stop the games!"

One barbarian leaped upon Flavius with a knife. Another barbarian had gripped his arms.

"Flavius! Flavius!" shouted Marcus, attempting to leap into the Arena. Two guards dragged him back.

The roaring crowd was intent upon the death struggle. None saw the belching flame suddenly pouring from the crater of Mount Vesuvius. It was too distant for the thunder of the eruption to reach their ears immediately.

Flavius fell under the knife stroke of the barbarian.

Then a woman screamed. Another. And another.

A DEEP, thunderous roar shook the pillars of the Arena. The dead and dying in the pit were instantly forgotten. The first shock of the earthquake had struck. Masonry was toppling. Fire and flying rock flew from the crater, as the face of Vesuvius was blasted off.

The concrete awning crashed down upon the Prefect's private box. Curdling screams of death filled the tiers. Thousands started rushing in panic toward the exits.

With blood trickling from a dozen wounds, Flavius pulled himself from under a heap of dead and dying men. He staggered toward the exit under the towering figure of Colossus. A wounded barbarian dragged himself along. The whole gigantic figure of Colossus came crashing upon him.

Marcus was fighting to reach the Arena. He shouted vainly, "My son—they've killed him—in there——" The fleeing crowd caught him up and bore him back.

Flavius reached the broken door under the fallen Colossus. His strength was just sufficient to twist the door loose.

Down the sides of Vesuvius poured a smoking river. Flaming lava spread its annihilation.

Clodia and four other women were locked in a small cell. The Greek slave, Leaster, rushed upon a jailer in the corridor.

"The keys! Unlock this cell!" Leaster grappled with the man.

The space darkened. Masonry cracked with a warning rumble. The jailer struck at Leaster with a short dagger. Leaster fell. The man trampled over him.

Leaster crawled to the cell door. "I couldn't let you die—down here——" Blood tinged his lips. "I saw Flavius die. It's the end for all of us."

A blood-smeared figure staggered in. The hands held an iron bar.

"Clodia, oh, Clodia!"

It was Flavius. With desperate strength, he smashed the cell door. Clodia and Flavius bent over Leaster. The old Greek slave smiled.

"Save yourselves——" The murmur was his death word.

Stones crashed from the wall. Flavius pulled Clodia to safety.

In the quadrangle, the cursing Burbix was lashing slaves with a long whip. Walls caved around them.

"Get on you! Take that chest! We must save the master's gold!"

"Burbix, let us escape," a slave pleaded.

"I'll lead you to a boat, but not without Marcus's treasure!"

A pall of smoke had settled over Pompeii. It was like night. In the bay, hot lava fell. A ship exploded into flame. Rich and poor, nobles and slaves ran like rats through the streets of the market.

MARCUS was swept along by the crowd. The head of the Arena was in a daze. He muttered, "My son—dead—dead!"

A building bulged. It crashed into the street. Marcus was felled by a stone. He got slowly to his knees.

"Flavius!" he groaned. "What god is there to call upon? Oh, God of mercy—pity—my son—my son!"

Like an echo came a voice. "My son—my son!"

Under fallen stones lay a small boy. The jail warder who had refused Marcus's plea, desperately hurt, was trying to drag out the child.

"Help me, help me!" moaned the warder to Marcus.

"You!" cried Marcus. "You're the warder! You ask my help, you who could have let my son go free!"

Marcus staggered away. Behind him the warder pleaded.

"Marcus! Have mercy on my son!"

Marcus said violently, "Have mercy on your——" He halted and looked up at the smoky sky. "I cried that once—and He heard me!"

His shoulders tensed. His hands pulled away the broken pillar pinning the boy. The warder had died, faintly smiling.

Marcus got to his feet with the boy in his arms. He stood irresolute a moment.

Then he cried, "There are many sons to save!"

Burbix came, herding slaves with Marcus's treasure in bags and chests. They carried the gold in the litters used by nobles. Marcus, bearing the warder's son on his shoulder, saw the procession.

"Marcus!" roared Burbix. "Here is your money! Quick, to your wharf! Your boat is the best means of escape!"

A woman fell at the feet of Marcus. A baby rolled from her arms. Marcus looked at the loyal Burbix.

"Stop!" he commanded. "Throw down the gold!"

"What!" said Burbix. "Don't you understand? Your treasure!"

"Throw it into the streets!" thundered Marcus. "Clear these litters! Pick up the wounded, the children! Get to my boat! My house! The wharf will be untouched!"

MARCUS caught up the woman's child. He saw the woman placed on a litter. Bags of gold rolled into the street. A rich woman fought her way to one of the litters.

Children crowded around Marcus. A rain of ashes sifted on their upturned faces. The mighty Burbix, whom the eruption had not terrorized, found himself with two babies clinging to his neck. Behind the moving group the pavement collapsed, carrying shrieking victims to their deaths.

Across the Temple of Jupiter a fiery river of lava flowed. Two maddened elephants trampled screaming victims into the stones. The rolling chariots crushed many others as the nobles fled.

The great stone Temple of Jupiter tottered, then collapsed with majestic weight upon worshipers of its futile god. Near the water front, the panic-stricken crowd crushed onto the narrow stone bridge leading to the bay. A river of flaming lava carried off the gateway behind the fugitives. Then it overwhelmed the stone bridge.

Marcus and Burbix fought their way down to the private wharf. This section of shore was still unscathed. Behind them, the entrance to the grounds of Marcus was suddenly blocked by the falling gate and the wall.

Litters of children, of injured women and men crowded the wharf of Marcus. Rocks rolled down the hill. Death screams rent the pall of ash-filled darkness. Close to Marcus crouched a woman. She had come with a wounded man on a litter.

The boat already was well loaded. Marcus saw no more could be taken.

"Make ready to cast off!" he commanded.

The woman caught his arm. She lifted her face. It was Clodia, the slave girl. She motioned to the man on the litter.

"Yes," said Marcus. "There will be room for him, too."

Marcus lifted the man in his arms. He stared unbelievingly. The man was Flavius. He opened his eyes and smiled at his father.

"Father? Did you save me, after all?"

Marcus spoke in a tone of awed wonder.

"God of mercy—God of pity—You let me save my son!"

There arose a clamor on the grounds. Barred gates leading to the wharf had been closed. The Prefect stood there with soldiers. They bore chests of money. They were hammering at the gates.

"Open the gates!" commanded the Prefect. "I bring the public treasure! Unload that boat, Marcus!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE VISION OF MARCUS.

MARCUS, once the smith of Pompeii, and once its richest man, spoke to the Prefect, the voice of authority from Rome.

"The boat is loaded, excellency! We

are ready to cast off! Not for the treasure of Rome would I unload this boat!"

"In the name of Caesar!" thundered the Prefect.

"Cast off!" ordered Marcus.

The boat with its cargo of children and wounded moved slowly. Burbix stood at the tiller.

"Marcus!" shouted Burbix. "Come aboard! Save yourself!"

But the boat moved from the wharf. Marcus stood erect at the barred gates. With his bare hands he was resisting the attempt to break the locks. A soldier drove a spear through the bars.

Marcus fell, with the weapon piercing his breast.

The oars of the galley dipped. The turmoil of water widened between the boat and the wharf.

"Bring that boat back!" shouted the Prefect. "I warn you——"

Soldiers trampled over the fallen Marcus.

"The men at the oars!" cried the Prefect. "Shoot them! Stop them with arrows!"

The bowmen drew their pointed barbs. They were aiming at the helpless men pulling the oars. Old Vesuvius gave forth a blast mightier than all gone before. Above the soldiers pillars, rocks and lava rushed down upon them.

Gray ashes showered upon the boat like hot, silvery snow. Clodia held Flavius's head to her bosom. Burbix crouched beside her. The ex-convict's ugly face was twisted with grief. He was looking back toward the shore, toward the house of Marcus.

"He died," whispered Clodia, "to save us all!"

GRAY ashes drifted slowly over all that had been Pompeii. The lava had ceased to flow. Only the occasional tremor of a slowly settling wall could be heard. All the noise and the clamor of death and terror had died. Died under tons of débris that had been the majestic Temple of Jupiter, the Forum, the Arena with its bloody sports, the Market Place of the Slaves—all of the wealthy and wicked city.

Where the House of Marcus had stood was a spreading pall of gray ashes. From these, near the wharf, protruded a white hand. On one finger of this dead hand was a ring with the imperial seal of Rome.

A helmet, bearing the imperial insignia, lay battered and crushed. The hand was stretched mutely toward a broken chest from which the gold had spilled.

The gray ashes still sifted down like hot, silvery snow. There was no sun in the blotted sky. But to the eyes of the dying Marcus there came a brightness greater than that of the sun.

The blacksmith of Pompeii slowly opened his eyes. His head and shoulders were upheld by the ruins of the gate he had defended at the last. Then he seemed to see the Man. He turned his head to see the figure more clearly.

"So many years ago, Lord," Marcus murmured, very low. "Another chance for me?"

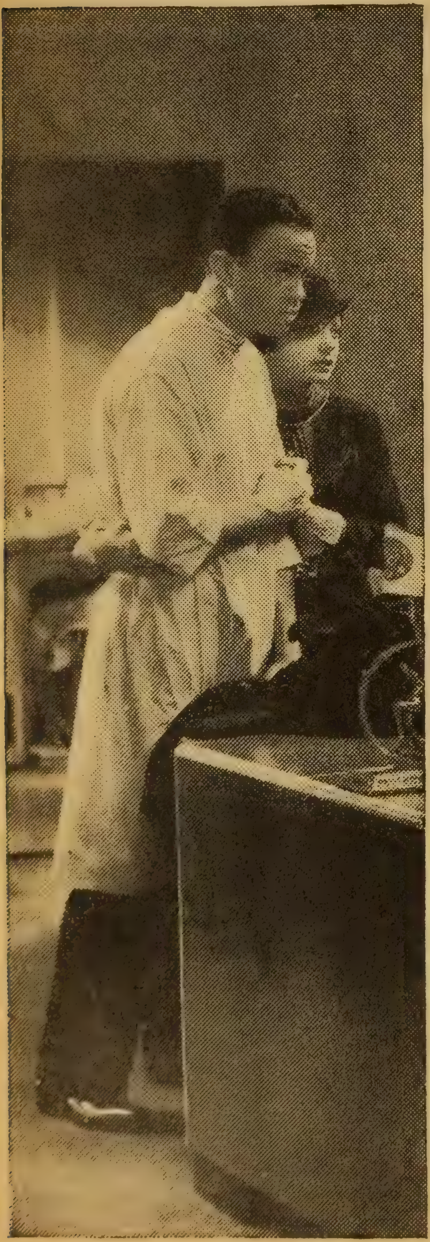
A voice spoke gently.

"He that loses his life for My sake, shall never die."

A smile came to the face of Marcus. It expressed an utter peace. He slowly lifted his hands toward the Voice. His eyes closed and the arms of Marcus were at rest.

THE CRIME OF DOCTOR CRESPI

His hated rival at his mercy on the operating table.



Miss Rexford flung herself forward, clasping Doctor Arnold in her arms.

MRS. ESTELLE ROSS was a lovely, a desirable woman. The tragic anxiety on her oval face only enhanced her beauty. The deep eyes of the austere Doctor Andre Crespi burned like suddenly lighted coals, as he looked at her, hungrily.

"Please don't think I'm terrible coming here, Andre," she said.

"Not at all, Estelle. You're always welcome."

Doctor Crespi said this despite his attempted refusal to see her. He had told his head nurse, Miss Rexford, not to admit the woman. But Mrs. Ross had pushed through the half-opened door, into his sumptuous office.

"I need your help, Andre," she hurried on. "It's about Stephen."

"Stephen?" Doctor Crespi's thin lips almost whispered the name. "Why come to me about Stephen?"

"He's hurt—terribly hurt, Andre. In the auto. They say he may die."

Doctor Crespi's voice became cold, controlled.

"I hope not, for your sake. But don't you think you could have spared me this visit? There are many competent physicians."

Mrs. Ross made a pitiful gesture with her white hands.

"All have given him up. They say you are his only hope. It is his head, and you with your skill could—— Oh, please, understand, Andre. Can't you forget, and forgive?"

"Forget, forgive, understand? I understand how he turned you from me, after I trusted him like a son. Made love to you."

Mrs. Ross placed a trembling hand on Doctor Crespi's arm.

"Please, Andre, you must do this for me, and for Jeanne."

Doctor Crespi's face abruptly masked his first resentment. Watching Mrs. Ross intently, he picked up the desk phone.

"Get me Doctor Thomas," he said slowly. "We are bringing in an emergency case, right away."

He asked a quick, low question of the woman. Then he spoke again into the phone.

"Send the ambulance to 1214 South Franklin at once, for Mr. Stephen Ross. I'm operating on Mr. Ross at five o'clock. Is that clear?"

Doctor Crespi arose to his lean, unusual height. His hands touched the shoulders of the trembling woman. An enigmatic expression crept over his deep eyes.

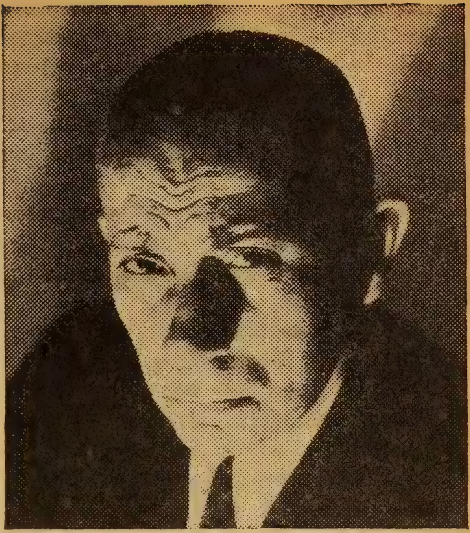
"I want this to succeed for your sake, Estelle," he said. "But I'll have to ask you to wait outside. I have a lot to do."

Mrs. Ross touched his hand gently. She smiled with radiant hopefulness. Doctor Crespi's eyes gleamed mockingly as she went out.

DOCTOR CRESPI returned slowly to his desk. He glanced at the clock. It showed 4:25. Its pendulum made a rhythmic ticking. Doctor Crespi sat motionless, except for the movement of his hand. He was tapping a pencil thoughtfully on his desk. The tapping kept time with the clock's ticking.

The clock showed 4:55 when the pencil snapped in Doctor Crespi's fingers. He threw the ends on his desk. Then he arose decisively.

Though he was chief surgeon of the Taft Clinic, his experimental table was unusually complete. It was evident chemical research must be his greatest hobby.



Dr. Andre Crespi

The Cast

Eric von Stroheim	Dr. Crespi
Dwight Frye	Dr. Thomas
Paul Guilfoyle	Dr. Arnold
Estelle Russell	Mrs. Ross
John Bohn	Stephen Ross
Geraldine Kay	Miss Rexford
Jeanne Kelly	Miss Gordon
Patsy Berlin	Jeanne
Joe Verdi	Di Angelo
Dean Raymond	Minister

Story by John H. Auer, Lewis Graham, Edwin Olmstead

Produced and directed by John H. Auer

REPUBLIC PICTURES

A novelized version of the Republic Picture of the same title soon to be released.

Doctor Crespi's countenance now wore a sardonic smile. He carefully measured a colorless liquid into a small square bottle. This he placed in his vest pocket. But the smile was wiped off as he turned.

Young Doctor Thomas was standing in the doorway.

"I came—er—er—to——" stammered the younger man.

"Well, what?" snapped Doctor Crespi in a hard voice.

"I merely stopped to say that everything is ready, Doctor Crespi."

"Has Mr. Ross been brought in?"

"Doctor Arnold received him. Everything will be ready in five minutes."

Doctor Thomas still stood, looking intently at his chief.

"Well, then let's have it over with!" snapped Crespi.

He walked briskly with Doctor Thomas toward the operating room.

DOCTOR THOMAS and Doctor Arnold were scrubbing their hands in the washroom.

"Good gosh! I wish I had a chance at trepanning!" said Doctor Arnold.

A nurse was helping Doctor Thomas with his gown.

"Darned funny business," said Thomas.

Arnold looked at him quizzically. "What's eating you now, Thomas? Ross and the old man have been pals for years!"

"I know, I know. That's what makes it odd."

"You're crazy!" said Doctor Arnold disgustedly. "Ross is badly hurt. Nothing more natural in the world than Crespi putting him together again. It's decent, what he ought to do for a friend."

"Maybe so," murmured Doctor Thomas. "But Crespi doesn't forget so easily. Especially when he's lost a woman like Estelle Ross."

"Don't be a fool!" warned Arnold.

As they spoke, the emergency cart rolled silently along the corridor. Only the eyes of Stephen Ross were visible among the bandages. But he was conscious.

Estelle Ross bent over him.

"Oh, darling!" She mustered a little smile. "Don't worry!"

Doctor Crespi stood beside the woman. He greeted his patient.

"How are you, Stephen? Don't try to speak. You'll need all of your strength—in there."

Stephen Ross's eyes were alive. His lips moved without sound. At the door of the operating room, Crespi touched Mrs. Ross's shoulder.

"Don't worry, Estelle, I promise to pull him through."

"Thank you, Andre," she whispered.

THE hand of the nurse wiped the perspiration from Doctor Crespi's forehead. The chief surgeon's hands were steady as steel. When the gleaming scalpel had first touched Stephen Ross, those skilled hands had not seemed so sure. The doubtful eyes of Doctor Thomas had been watching closely.

Now Doctor Crespi said, "Dressing, please."

Doctor Thomas, his first assistant, responded promptly. The delicate operation was over. Even Thomas could not but admire the manner in which the patient's brain had been relieved of deadly pressure.

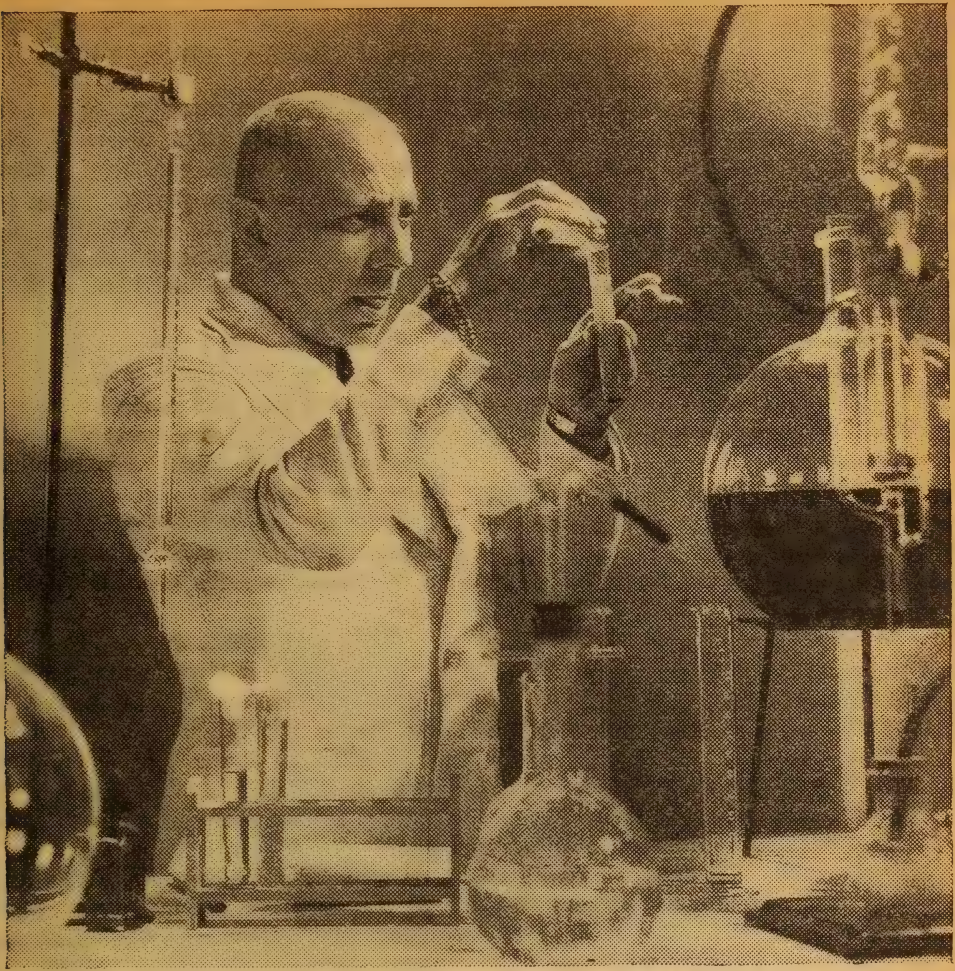
But suddenly a new tenseness came into the room. Crespi was watching the machine recording his patient's breathing. The bag had dropped. Crespi caught his patient's pulse.

"Stethoscope, please!" His speech was curt, anxious.

He applied the instrument and listened. Then he spoke quickly.

"Adrenalin, please, in hypo. Turn him over, please."

His keen eyes swung to his assistants. They scarcely breathed. Their patient was going—going—and they knew it.



Doctor Crespi . . . wore a sardonic smile as he carefully measured a colorless liquid into a small . . . bottle.

Doctor Crespi applied the hypo below the heart. He bore down on the needle.

As he straightened, he said, "I was afraid for a moment I had lost him, but he is apparently out of danger."

Stephen Ross was breathing evenly. It seemed he would live.

Five minutes later, Estelle Ross clung to Doctor Crespi's hand. They were in his luxurious office. Crespi looked at the woman through half-lidded eyes, as if he was very tired.

"I promised you he would come through, and he did. In a few weeks he'll be better than ever. We'll let you see him, in a little while."

Estelle pressed his hand to her cheek. She failed to catch the sinister innuendo in Crespi's weary voice. It may have seemed to her only the result of a fatiguing operation.

IT was 5:23 when Mrs. Ross talked with Doctor Crespi. Shortly thereafter, or at 5:40 to be exact, Doctor Phillip Arnold was speaking with Miss Rexford.

the nurse at the corridor desk. The severity of Miss Rexford's uniform could not disguise her alluring charm. Doctor Arnold leaned close to her with a smile. He glanced around.

"It's five-forty," he said suggestively.

"Why, so it is, Phillip," she replied, watching his eyes.

The corridor was deserted. Doctor Crespi's door was closed. Doctor Arnold became most unprofessional. Miss Rexford was in his arms.

"Please—please, Phillip!" she explained. "You're mussing me up terribly! Suppose Doctor Crespi should come out?"

They both laughed, then Doctor Arnold said, "Take a letter, Miss Rexford."

Miss Rexford spoke as if dictating to herself:

"To all of the medical world: Doctor Phillip Arnold has the nicest way of crinkling his nose and laughing with his eyes. He should be chief surgeon at the Taft Clinic."

"Huh?" admonished Doctor Arnold. "Do you want to get me fired?"

"But it is so," whispered the pretty Miss Rexford. "I'll have to beat it now, before that old dragon becomes suspicious."

Miss Rexford looked maliciously at a picture of Doctor Crespi.

At this moment, Crespi sat at his office desk. He pulled smoke into his lungs. His tray held a dozen cigarette stubs. Glancing at the clock, the surgeon crushed the burning cigarette.

From his desk he took a blank of green paper. It was a certificate of death. The great surgeon's mouth was a mocking pucker. He looked again at the clock.

"Yes, that would be about the time," he said softly to himself.

He wrote rapidly, filling in the certificate. The time of the death he filled in as "6:18 p. m." Then he returned the sheet to the top drawer. For the first time he laughed—a low, chilling guttural of apparent amusement.

EVEN as Doctor Crespi was uttering his secret, sinister laugh, Doctor Thomas was bending over Stephen Ross. Estelle Ross and her four-year-old daughter, Jeanne, hovered near the bedside. The face of the ward nurse was suddenly set in grim lines. She had been watching Doctor Thomas.

Estelle Ross's lips were parted. She was looking into the eyes of her husband. And she had become aware he was trying to tell her something. But his strength had failed. His breathing was growing fainter.

Suddenly the tall figure of Doctor Crespi stood in the door. His voice held a physician's readily assumed cheerfulness.

"Well, and how is our patient?"

Doctor Thomas turned squarely, looking at his chief. Then he came close and spoke rapidly.

"Can't make it out, sir. Hardly any respiration, pulse, or heart action. He was in perfect condition, a few minutes ago."

Doctor Crespi's watch was in his hand. He leaned close, listening for Ross's heart beat. The patient's eyes were fixed, staring at the ceiling. His breathing was becoming less pronounced.

Doctor Crespi glanced at his watch. Its hands showed 6:17. One more minute passed slowly. Crespi straightened up. His face was a masklike enigma.

"I'm sorry, Estelle," he said slowly. "But it had to be."

Mrs. Ross's hands fluttered, seized Doctor Crespi's arm.

"Andre, it can't be true! His eyes seem to be talking, trying to tell me something!" Then she sobbed. "Oh, it isn't fair!"

Doctor Crespi directed the nurse to take the child, Jeanne. Then he went into the corridor, pausing at Miss Rexford's desk.

Crespi was watching the machine recording his patient's breathing. The bag had dropped.

"Will you do me a favor, Miss Rexford? I'd like you to accompany Mrs. Ross home to-night. You see, we just lost Mr. Ross."

Estelle Ross came slowly from the room of death.

Doctor Crespi said, "Estelle, I've asked Miss Rexford to accompany you home. I'll call later, about nine o'clock."

Estelle Ross nodded agreement. Her tears had drowned her speech.

Crespi walked slowly into his office,

closing the door. He was sitting before his desk when a knock sounded and Doctor Thomas entered.

"Is there anything I can do?" said Doctor Thomas, sympathetically.

"Only see that Ross is put downstairs," said Crespi.

"Will you sign the death certificate before you leave?"

Crespi was silent for several seconds. Then he took a green certificate from his desk and said, "Will you check the time for me, Doctor Thomas?"

"It was six-eighteen exactly," said Doctor Thomas.

"Quite right," said Doctor Crespi briefly, handing the filled-in certificate to Doctor Thomas.

Doctor Thomas stared at the paper and back at Doctor Crespi. His lips tightened. The younger man was estimating the time. The ink on the death certificate was well dried. He clenched his teeth.

But all he said was, "Will there be anything else to-night?"

Crespi shook his head negatively. He sat alone. Soon he departed.

Shortly after nine o'clock, Doctor Crespi was in the home of Estelle Ross. Baby Jeanne had been crying for her daddy. Her mother wept, as she tried to comfort the child.

"Come now, Estelle," soothed Doctor Crespi, "you'll have to pull yourself together. You ought to get out of town. Your mother's home would be best."

"Do you think I should, Andre?"

Doctor Crespi nodded gravely.

"You'd better get some sleep now. It's quite late."

SHORTLY after Doctor Crespi left the Ross home, Miss Rexford talked with Doctor Phillip Arnold on the telephone.

"But how can I see you, dear?" she was saying. "It's eleven-thirty now.

"I know it," replied Arnold's voice. "But you meet me downstairs. I have a surprise."

"Well, all right, Phillip. But only for half an hour. The old dragon gave Mrs. Ross sleeping powders. Meet you in ten minutes."

Ten minutes later, Doctor Phillip Arnold slipped a diamond ring on the "right" finger of Miss Rexford, the nurse. After he had kissed her, Miss Rexford murmured, "What a day! What a day!"

And at the Taft Clinic it *had* been quite a day. In the morning quintuplets had been born to a little mother. Miss Rexford's enumeration of this item to an excitable father had left both of them breathless.

Later, an aviator, victim of a crash, had been "lost." It had been somewhat of a blow to Doctor Crespi's pride that he could not save him. Then had come the strange case of Stephen Ross.

Now Miss Rexford was engaged to the brilliant Doctor Phillip Arnold. It was almost too much for her. She wept a little on his ready shoulder.

At last she said, "It's nearly midnight, darling. I'll have to get back to my patient."

AND the clock showed four minutes to midnight near a door with a "NO ADMITTANCE" sign. An elongated shadow moved quickly across this door. A key scarcely grated as the door opened. The shadow moved silently toward the wall.

Death was here. Death on five cold pillars of stone. For this was the morgue of the Taft Clinic. The floor creaked a little as the eerie shadow moved among the marble slabs.

The single ray of a moonbeam gave a ghastly light. The moving shadow lifted a sheet from a cold face. There was a muttered exclamation, and the sheet was replaced. The shroud of the second slab was lifted.

But it was the third stone which contained the still figure of Stephen Ross.

The ghastly moonbeam showed the rigid features. The staring, fixed eyes. There was a hissing breath from the shadow.

Then there was slow, measured, mocking speech.

"Hello, Stephen, my friend! I think you expected I would come. You know Andre Crespi never failed any one. And least of all myself."

Doctor Crespi touched the cold face with gentle fingers.

"My dear friend, my dead friend, yes," he said softly. "They all think you're dead, except you and I, Stephen. We know you're not dead."

Had the moonbeam shifted, or had Stephen Ross's eyes moved?

The mocking voice went on, "You thought I'd forgotten the vile thing you had done to me. When I smiled, you thought I had forgiven you. No. My friend, I am still smiling, and there you lie. Shall we say dead?"

Doctor Crespi laughed ironically.

"Now you can't laugh at me the way you did when I came to you and begged on my knees to let Estelle alone. She was the only pleasure of my life. You laughed at me! Then *you* married her."

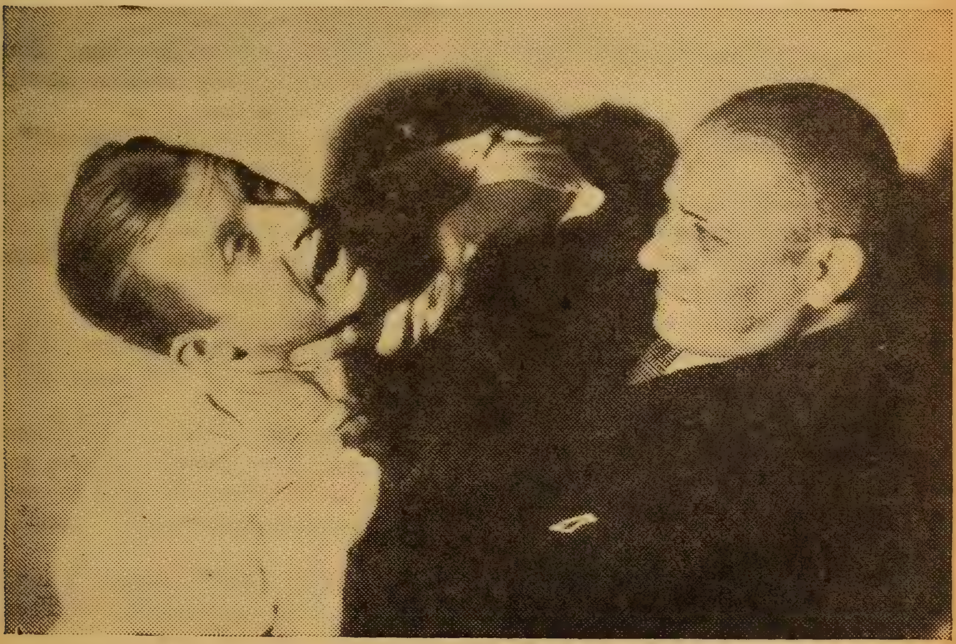
The booming notes of a steeple clock sounded midnight.

The lips of Stephen Ross moved, as if in a desperate attempt to speak. Doctor Crespi took a hypodermic needle from one pocket. From another he removed a little square bottle. In a moment he jabbed the needle into Stephen Ross's arm.

"Now then, that's better," intoned Crespi. "It will keep you quiet for another twenty-four hours. You don't know what has come over you, do you, Stephen? You made me suffer for five years with my eyes and ears open, alive! That's how *you're* going to suffer!"

The ghoulish voice droned on and on.

"How did I do it? I pored over books of every age. My hatred gave me strength. At last I knew I was able to concoct this drug. I inject it into your veins. Your breathing subsides. Your heart quiets until it cannot be heard.



His hand shot out, closed on the other man's throat.

Your muscles stiffen. But you are alive, seeing—hearing—suffering!"

Doctor Crespi's voice became maniacal mockery.

"And that way, dear Stephen, you shall be buried. You will see your own funeral. To-morrow night at midnight, you will be gasping, suffocating. Your body will be alive again, but it will be too late. When you scream, nobody will hear you."

Doctor Crespi could not see nor hear the aged and lame night watchman pause outside the door of the morgue. His voice became more softly fiendish.

"And you told me once, Stephen, you liked jonquils. I shall send some to-morrow for your coffin. Look for them, Stephen."

A key suddenly turned in the lock of the door. Crespi started.

"I must leave you now, my friend," he said. "Pleasant dreams. I shall see you to-morrow."

Doctor Crespi again became a shadow. The shadow faded through a long window. A puzzled watchman halted inside the door.

"I was sure I heard some 'un talkin'," he muttered.

But apparently there was no life in the vault of death.

IT was nearly noon the next day when Doctor Crespi returned to his clinical office. For the first time, he looked pale and a little shaken. For he had just come from another visit to the morgue.

That visit had given him an unpleasant moment. He had discovered an undertaker's assistant almost in the act of beginning to embalm the body of Stephen Ross. In another few seconds, the embalmer would have known he had been called to work upon a living man.

Doctor Crespi was realizing that only the fortunate stupidity of the undertaker's assistant had saved him from discovery. He had paid ten dollars, then told the embalmer, "I gave distinct orders nothing but a coffin was to be supplied. My friend, Stephen Ross, was unutterably opposed to all embalming."

Had even this stupid fellow looked at him queerly? Doctor Crespi could not be sure. But the man had departed. That danger was past. Doctor Crespi now said to Miss Gordon, his secretary, "You will please order jonquils for me, to be placed on the casket of my friend, Stephen Ross."

Miss Gordon nodded, and returned to her own office. Because he desired strictest privacy, the surgeon's secretary had an office of her own down the corridor.

Crespi saw that drizzling rain was dimming the windows. He sat at his desk, staring out at the dismal day. His deep eyes seemed inscrutable. His look was that of cold, satisfied madness.

He turned quickly as the door clicked and footsteps sounded.

Young Doctor Thomas stepped in and walked over to the desk.

"Did I call you?" snapped Crespi.

Thomas hesitated a little, but said, "Not this time, I——"

Crespi's eyes bored into him. Something about his first assistant straightened him in his chair.

"I don't wish to be disturbed!" he snapped. "Is that clear?"

Thomas leaned over the desk, his hands tightly clenched.

"It's about Stephen Ross. There's something I've *got* to know!"

Crespi smiled cynically.

"That case is closed, Thomas. I don't care to discuss it. You have all the charts."

"You are mistaken," asserted Thomas. "The case is *not* closed. We are going to discuss it, because the most important thing does not appear on the charts."

DOCTOR CRESPI stared at his assistant. The voice of Doctor Thomas was filled with his own conviction.

"Ross was poisoned! And you can't

get away with it! I know you did it, and I know why you did it—you couldn't explain!"

Doctor Crespi came to his feet slowly, with a catlike movement. One hand caught the lapel of the other man's coat.

"You be careful, Thomas——" His palm slapped the younger doctor's cheek. "Explain? To whom? Explain what?"

Again Crespi's hand struck his young assistant. Doctor Thomas made no movement.

"That will get you nothing, Crespi," he said quietly. "Hit me again. I still say you poisoned him!"

"That'll be enough from you!" raged Crespi.

His hand shot out, closed on the other man's throat. The young doctor's eyes suddenly bulged. He choked out a scream.

"You murdered him! You can't choke that out of me! You can't shut me up! You murdered him!"

Crespi suddenly had the grip of a madman. Doctor Thomas flailed at him with his fists. But the throttling hold tightened. The man's knees buckled. He slumped limply to the floor.

Crespi was muttering, "Murdered—poisoned—what do you know? What does anybody know?"

He pulled a roll of adhesive tape from his cabinet. In little more than a minute, Doctor Thomas was locked in the small office closet. His wrists and ankles were tightly taped. His mouth was closely plastered.

Doctor Crespi calmly picked up the telephone.

"Miss Gordon," he said quietly, "be sure to have those jonquils sent to the Ross funeral, at Fairlawn Chapel. Enclose my card."

Doctor Crespi straightened his tie. He phoned for his car to be brought around. With outwardly calm assurance, Doctor Andre Crespi prepared to attend the funeral of his friend and one-time colleague, Doctor Stephen Ross.

THE funeral of Stephen Ross was being conducted at Fairlawn Chapel. Miss Gordon, at this time, was walking with an interne along the hospital corridor. The interne halted suddenly.

"What's all that noise?" he said.

From somewhere near by came thumping thuds. Doctor Thomas had come to his senses. He hammered desperately at the door of the locked closet.

"Some of the patients, I suppose," said Miss Gordon.

The thudding ceased for a moment. The interne and Miss Gordon walked away. When the blows came again, no one was near Doctor Crespi's door.

Doctor Thomas hammered with his taped fists until they were bruised. Despairingly, he estimated the time. He was exhausted with his struggling. Outside, a little clock chimed. The young doctor groaned and his pounding ceased.

"They've buried Stephen Ross by this time," he mumbled.

He had spoken the truth. Stephen Ross had been buried. His coffin was deeply covered with cold earth.

And, returning from the funeral, Doctor Crespi walked into his office. He still wore his circumspect black clothes. He unlocked the closet. The huddled body of Doctor Thomas rolled out.

"Thomas," said Crespi, "I've treated you better than you deserved. If I hadn't locked you up, you'd have blurted your ideas all over the place. It wouldn't have helped you or me, or the hospital. Now I'm going to let you go. But in the future, you keep your ideas to yourself."

Doctor Thomas stared at him without speaking.

"Now get out and go back to your work!" commanded Doctor Crespi. "Any more bad dreams and we'll try the observation ward! You can't get away with it, Thomas!"

Doctor Thomas seemed to realize the impossibility of proving his charge. He went out without a word.

"YOU can't get away with it," said Doctor Thomas. "That's what I told him."

"You'll never prove it on the old man, even if he did poison him," said Doctor Arnold, dubiously. "Anyway, no grave-robbing for me."

They were in Doctor Arnold's office. It was early evening of the day Stephen Ross had been buried.

"We can dig up the body, perform an autopsy and have him back in the cemetery in two hours," insisted Doctor Thomas.

"Well, bring him in, and I'll help you work on him," assented Doctor Arnold, still doubtfully.

"You'll have to help get the body," said Doctor Thomas. "Crespi is guilty or he wouldn't have locked me up. If you won't help, I'll go to the district attorney."

Doctor Arnold finally said, "Rather than be put under a cloud of suspicion, I'll help. What time do we start?"

"About ten o'clock," said Doctor Thomas. "I'll have everything."

Doctor Arnold called Miss Rexford at once.

"When will you leave Mrs. Ross?" he inquired.

"She's catching the midnight for her mother's," replied the nurse. "I'm bringing her to the hospital. The old dragon's taking her to the station."

"Swell," said Doctor Arnold. "Meet you at the hospital."

AN hour before midnight, Doctor Crespi was in his office. His face showed he had been drinking. He took another drink. Then he picked up the telephone.

"I'm expecting Mrs. Ross," he said, thickly. "Have her come directly to my office when she gets here."

Doctor Crespi helped himself to another drink. His mouth twisted in an evil smile. But he would not have smiled so confidently if he could have seen within the operating room of Doctor Arnold's private office.

There the body of Stephen Ross lay on the table. Doctor Thomas was removing the funeral clothes. Doctor Arnold watched closely.

"What do you make of it, Thomas? Dead a day and a half, and *rigor mortis* hasn't set in yet!"

This had been the first thing Doctor Arnold had noticed when they had lifted the body from the new grave, an hour before.

But Doctor Arnold continued laying out his instruments.

"Ready?" he said.

"All ready," replied Doctor Thomas.

Doctor Arnold bent closely over the body. Then he suddenly came erect.

"Good gosh! Look, Thomas! It's blood! Live blood!"

As if the touch of the scalpel had resurrected him, Stephen Ross was gasping for breath. His lips moved. Slowly, very slowly, he was pulling himself erect. Instruments clattered from the hands of the two surgeons.

Half an hour later, a night nurse was talking into the phone.

"This is the quietest spot in the world," she yawned. "There hasn't been any excitement since the quintuplets. Gosh, I wish something would happen!"

A hand touched her shoulder. A man's voice said gently, "Where is he—Doctor Crespi?"

The night nurse turned. Her piercing shriek echoed through the corridor. She was looking into the eyes of Stephen Ross.

DOCTOR CRESPI was still seated at his desk. The bottle of liquor was almost empty. The surgeon was looking at a newspaper. It showed a picture of Doctor Stephen Ross.

"Deplorable—deplorable," muttered Crespi thickly. "What a loss to the profession——" He laughed boisterously.

"And may God have mercy on your soul."

Doctor Crespi was laughing again, harshly. A figure was moving across the office, coming slowly toward him.

"So you've come back to haunt me," mumbled the surgeon, downing the last of the liquor. "Weren't you satisfied with your casket?"

He rubbed a hand across his forehead.

"Sit down—sit down—or do ghosts sit down?"

Ross collapsed weakly in a chair. Doctor Crespi's senses seemed to be clearing.

"I'll be a son-of-a-gun if you don't look real!" He reached out and slapped Ross's cheek. Suddenly his eyes changed to insane fear. His hands followed Ross's shoulders. Then he sprang up, screaming, "You! You *are!*"

With the movement of a panther, Doctor Crespi swung to his desk. Apparently he did not see Doctor Arnold and Doctor Thomas entering, followed closely by Mrs. Estelle Ross and Miss Rexford. The four halted spellbound.

Doctor Crespi had a revolver in his hand. Estelle Ross screamed.

"Stephen! Stephen! Oh, you poor darling!"

She threw herself forward, arms encircling the man in the chair.

Doctor Crespi shouted insanely, "Keep away from him, Estelle!"

The gun in his hand swung upon the others.

"Stand still! Don't move!"

Miss Rexford flung herself forward, clasping Doctor Arnold in her arms. Doctor Crespi slowly dropped the hand holding the gun. He spoke lifelessly.

"Don't worry. I won't hurt any of you. It's all over. I'm all through—finished! The great Doctor Crespi—the great Doctor Crespi—he's through."

Doctor Thomas sprang forward. He alone had seemed to realize what would happen.

"Don't!" he yelled, but he was too late.

Smoke curled from the gun after the explosion.

"Doctor Crespi——" said Doctor Thomas.

"You were right," murmured the chief surgeon. "Right, Thomas—I can't get away with it."

He sat down very wearily. His head lay on his arms.

THE afternoon sun shone brightly into the end of the Taft Clinic hospital corridor. A little man came from the elevator. In one hand was a great bouquet. In the other five red balloons.

" 'Lo, doc!" greeted the man.

"Good afternoon," said Doctor Phillip Arnold. "So you've come to take your family home?"

"Sho', doc—all of 'em: Tony, Sammy, Marie, Dolores an' Theo—sho', doc, all of 'em."

"If you need us again, just call," smiled the doctor.

"Nexta year, maybe so, doc," smiled the little man.

The doctor laughed merrily and turned toward the office of the chief surgeon. The name on the door was Doctor Phillip Arnold. The woman rising from the desk inside was Mrs. Phillip Arnold. She had been Miss Rexford.

Doctor Thomas came to the inside door. Two shadows merged against the glass. The young doctor smiled. He went back down the corridor.

Stopping beside a desk, he said, "Doing anything to-night, Miss Gordon."

"Oh, Doctor Thomas!"

POWDER-SMOKE RANGE

HARRY CAREY

Guns blaze and hoofs thud in this modern range feud.

"TUSCON" SMITH ripped the poster off the tree in the canyon road. "Hm-m-m! Kinda behind times out here!" he exclaimed, good-humoredly.

"Yup," agreed "Lullaby" Joslin. "The Kid's square with the law."

" 'Less y' reckon he didn't keep his word," said "Stony" Brooke.

The poster offered $1,900 reward for Jeff Ferguson, alias the "Guadalupe Kid."

Tuscon Smith tossed the poster away. "I ain't doubtin' Jeff," he drawled. "He paid for his mistakes. That's good enough for me."

Two briefly spaced shots stopped the conversation. Tuscon Smith pulled his pony into the canyon road. The others followed. Close by, the wheels of a vehicle rattled to a stop. The three punchers raced down the trail.

The driver of the halted stage sprawled in his seat. The blue hole in his head left no doubt he was dead. An unmasked man was trying to cut open a mail sack on the ground.

Tuscon's right-hand gun flamed. Dust spurted in the bandit's face.

"Not so fast, hombre!" rapped out Tuscon. "See to that driver, Lullaby!"

Tuscon stared down at the man by the mail sack. The bandit glowered defiantly. Some of the mail had spilled out. Tuscon took the bandit's gun. His eyes alighted on a letter, address side up.

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" he exclaimed.

The envelope was addressed to "Tuscon Smith, Chancellor, Calif."

"Watch this hombre, Stony!" directed Tuscon, slitting the letter.

Then Tuscon stared at the contents.

A novelized version of the Radio Picture of the same title soon to be released

RKO
Radio
PICTURES

Screen Play by Adele Buffington

From the novel by William Colt MacDonald

Cliff Reid, Producer

Wallace Fox, Director

He looked into the furtive eyes of the bandit.

"That coach wasn't carryin' money, an' it had no guard," said Tuscon slowly. "This buzzard musta been after some mail."

Then Tuscon whistled softly. The letter addressed to him contained an option. He made out names. Manuel Tresbarro, Caroline Sibley and "Sourdough" Jenkins.

"Pardners," drawled Tuscon to Lullaby and Stony, "we've paid a thousan' smackers for a thirty-day option on the Tresbarro outfit at Los Potros. An' we owe thirty thousand dollars."

"Good gosh!" exploded Stony. "When did we do that? In our sleep?"

"The Guadalupe Kid," said Tuscon slowly. "It sounds like his work."

Tuscon Smith had expected no letter. He knew nothing of the option. The bandit was proclaiming he was "Fin" Sharkey. He said he had just happened along.

"We'll go into that little matter in Los Potros," advised Tuscon. "You can talk in jail."

BUT at a stage station outside Los Potros, Winters, the stage agent, was reluctant to identify Fin Sharkey. He shook his head sadly over the dead driver. Then a youthful blacksmith walked over to the stage.

"Charley Panzer!" he exclaimed, looking at the corpse. "And Fin Sharkey, huh? Well, I hope you hang for this, Sharkey!"

Winters, the agent, said warningly, "Better keep out of this."

"Who are you?" quizzed Tuscon Smith. "We're takin' this killer to the jail at Los Potros. He shot the driver and was robbin' the mail."

"My name's Taggart," announced the blacksmith. "There's only a deputy at Los Potros. Look out for him. His name's Brose Glascow, an' he's a rotten crook. Works for Big Steve Ogden, mayor of Los Potros. Ogden thinks he owns the town. He's got more cattle than was ever dropped by his own cows."

Fin Sharkey swore vilely. "Curse you, Taggart! Steve Ogden'll make it hot for you!"

"An' maybe you know somethin' about

THE CAST

Harry Carey	as Tuscon Smith	A Roving Cowboy
Hoot Gibson	as Stony Brooke	His Pal
Guinn "Big Boy" Williams	as Lullaby Joslin	Third Member of Devoted Trio
Bob Steele	as Jeff Ferguson	A Young Ex-convict
Tom Tyler	as Sundown Saunders	A Notorious Killer
Boots Mallory	as Caroline Sibley	A True Daughter of the West
Sam Hardy	as Big Steve Ogden	Crooked Mayor of Los Potros
Francis Ford	as Sourdough Jenkins	A Ranch Cook
Adrian Morris	as Brose Glascow	A Deputy Sheriff
Franklyn Farnum	as Jim Reece	A Rat-faced Rancher
Bill Desmond	as Happy Hopkins	Prop. of Happy Days Saloon
Wally Wales	as Bud Taggart	A Young Blacksmith
Art Mix	as Rube Phelps	Wholesome Young Cowpuncher
Buffalo Bill, Jr.	as Rex Malcolm	Wholesome Young Cowpuncher
Buzz Barton	as Bat Wing	Wholesome Young Cowpuncher
Eddie Dunn	as Jake Elliott	Ogden's Ranch Foreman
Ray Mayer	as Chap Bell	Ogden's Henchman
William Farnum	as Dan Orcham	A Banker

the killin' o' Manuel Tresbarro!" snapped Taggart.

Tuscon straightened, and said, "Tresbarro was killed?"

"Two nights ago," said Taggart. "At his ranch."

Tuscon glanced at the date of the ranch option. It had been signed shortly before Tresbarro, the ranch owner, had been murdered.

DEPUTY SHERIFF BROSE GLASCOW grinned sardonically at Tuscon Smith. Tuscon had left Fin Sharkey with Lullaby and Stony outside the boxlike jail at Los Potros. Without changing expression, Tuscon reported, "The stage to Chancellor was held up, and the driver was killed."

"Hm-m-m! That so?" drawled Deputy Glascow, with a sardonic sneer. "Well, I'll take up the trail as soon as possible."

His tone was clearly meant to dismiss Tuscon Smith.

Tuscon snapped suddenly, "Trail's closed, Glascow; Sharkey didn't get away!"

"Sharkey didn't——" Glascow caught his blunder.

"Huh?" mused Tuscon. "Kinda familiar with that hombre?"

Lullaby and Stony pushed the scowling Fin Sharkey into the room. Glascow frowned heavily, "Well, Sharkey, whatta y' got to say?"

"Whatta y' think, Brose?" snarled Sharkey cockily.

Glascow looked at Tuscon and his partners.

"You're strangers," he said. "Maybe you robbed the stage yourselves. I ain't lockin' up nobody on your say——"

Tuscon's gun prodded Glascow's ribs suddenly. He took the jail keys. Sharkey swore as he was shoved into a cell and it was locked. Tuscon came back and looked at the cursing Glascow.

"We've delivered you a prisoner, an' we're holdin' you responsible," said Tuscon. "When you're ready for trial, page Tuscon Smith. We're the new owners of the Tresbarro outfit."

Deputy Glascow gaped at him speechlessly. Tuscon led the way out. His next stop was the first saloon. It was called "Happy Days." "Happy" Hopkins was behind the bar. Only three youthful punchers were inside.

A nondescript, down-trodden specimen with a drooping mustache came in. He was packing a load of sadness. He complained of his boots hurting.

"Allus bellyachin', Sourdough," grinned Happy Hopkins. "You been cookin' at Tresbarro forty years, an' allus whinin'."

Tuscon walked over, and said, "You Sourdough Jenkins?"

Sourdough admitted he was. Tuscon opened the ranch option so he could read it. Sourdough's mouth flopped open.

"Jumpin' jiminetty!" howled Sourdough. "You're Jeff Ferguson's pals! Happy, meet the new owners o' the old Tresbarro!"

"Where's Jeff?" demanded Tuscon. "What's happened out there?"

Sourdough shook his head mournfully. "Ogden an' Glascow are tryin' to frame him for the murder of Tresbarro. But Ogden's gang done it, an' shot Jeff. Steve Ogden tried to get the ranch for fifteen thousand dollars. Jeff doubled the offer. Miss Caroline, old Tresbarro's ward, drew up the option an' mailed it to you for safety. Next night, that bunch o' snakes rode out an' shot Tresbarro."

"I was right," declared Tuscon. "Sharkey was after this letter."

The three youthful punchers heard the conversation. One suddenly announced they had been riding for Ogden, but had quit because he was rustling stock. The three were "Bat" Wing, "Rube" Phelps and Rex Malcolm.

Tuscon appraised them swiftly. After

one drink they had hired out as riders for Tuscon Smith on the Tresbarro.

"Everybody in this town's been scared into tradin' at Ogden's Red Bull Saloon," lamented Happy Hopkins.

BIG STEVE OGDEN'S Red Bull Saloon was crowded. Tuscon walked in. He identified the red-faced proprietor and walked directly to him. The scowling deputy, Glascow, was talking to Ogden.

"I suppose you're Ogden?" said Tuscon quietly. "Where's Jeff Ferguson?"

"So you're this Tuscon Smith?" sneered Ogden. "You'll be leavin' town pronto! I'll——"

Ogden signaled to two men. This pair started a dispute behind Tuscon. Tuscon's gun whipped suddenly into Ogden's stomach.

"Tell 'em to stop it, Ogden!" he said with a deadly voice. "That trick's too old, to get a man shot by accident. An'

An unmasked man was trying to cut open a mail sack on the ground.

you produce the Kid, or I'm takin' this town to pieces!"

Steve Ogden was yellow. "Barnett! Delisle!" he said to the two men quarreling. "Cut it out! All right, Smith! Glascow will bring Jeff Ferguson. Come on, forget it an' have a drink."

"I'm not drinkin' in this joint," smiled Tuscon, dangerously.

"Are you insinuatin' that I——" Ogden began to bluster.

"Take it any way you like," drawled Tuscon.

"Tuscon! Tuscon!" yelled Jeff Ferguson's voice behind him.

The Guadalupe Kid was wearing handcuffs. Deputy Glascow was frothing with rage. But he removed the handcuffs at Tuscon's order.

"Ogden an' Glascow tried givin' me the works, to make me tell about the option," said Jeff. "Say, Tuscon, did you get it?"

"Yeah, we got it," said Tuscon. "Now let's get outta here."

In the crowd, the man called Delisle whipped suddenly in front of Tuscon. He was waving two guns. Jeff whispered in Tuscon's ear. Tuscon nodded. Jeff catapulted from his toes. His football tackle sent the surprised Delisle to the floor.

The man Barnett was getting a gun into play. Tuscon's hand was a lightning streak. Bullets plugged Barnett's shoulder and his wrist.

Behind Tuscon, Deputy Glascow snarled, "One move, Smith, and I'll pull trigger! You can't get away with your bluff!"

Glascow's gun was in Tuscon's back. Steve Ogden smiled derisively, and sounded out his crowd.

"You wantin' this stranger to barge in, runnin' the town?" said Ogden.

"No! No! No! Run 'im out, Steve!" shouted his followers.

Guns were jamming Tuscon and Jeff into a tight ring. Then other voices, slow, menacing, spoke suddenly.

"Drop them guns! Drop 'em, alla yuh! Reach, hombres!"

Lullaby, Stony, Bat Wing, Rube Phelps and Rex Malcolm, with ready guns, showed at the windows and doors.

"Our new crew on the Tresbarro," smiled Tuscon. "C'mon, Jeff!"

"A joke's a joke," snapped Deputy Glascow. "But this is carrying it too far, an' I'm the law——"

"Yeah, Glascow, an' you're goin' farther," advised Tuscon coldly. "Take my advice an' drift this town pronto." Then, to his men: "Let's get some air that don't smell o' skunks."

Outside, Sourdough Jenkins whooped and banged Jeff on the shoulder.

"How's Caroline?" was Jeff's first question.

The Kid's tone caused Lullaby to chuckle. Sourdough winked at Tuscon.

"Car'line's O. K.," he drawled, " 'cept for frettin' herself sick over you."

By that, Tuscon Smith judged the Guadalupe Kid had more than one reason for becoming attached to the Tresbarro spread.

TUSCON SMITH, with his new crew, arrived at the rambling ranch in the low hills. On the way, Jeff had told him it had a spread of ninety miles of range. But its stock had dwindled to fifteen hundred head. Sourdough declared Ogden had helped himself to plenty of their beef.

And when they rode in, Tuscon and his partners had voted to call their new property the "Three-Bar-O."

A vivid, pretty girl ran from the ranch house. She seemed to see no one but Jeff. Much to his confusion, she flung herself into his arms.

"I've been so frightened for you, honey," cried the girl.

Jeff freed himself, stammering, "Y-y-you see, Caroline an' I were kids together."

"We getcha," drawled Lullaby. "We've got good eyesight."

"We've got some fast work ahead," stated Tuscon. "First, we count stock. An' no gunplay, unless it's forced."

THAT gunplay might be forced became apparent. Jake Elliott, foreman of the Steve Ogden outfit, was in the Red Bull Saloon.

"I tell yuh, boss, this Tuscon hombre works fast," he growled. "In less'n two weeks, the Tresbarro looks like new. He's got a hefty crew."

Steve Ogden swore viciously. "That ain't stoppin' me, Jake. You keep after all stock with their old brand. An' if there happens to be some drygulchin' o' their crew, I'll pay a bonus. Hire Mexicans to drive. Keep the regulars for their guns. Now get goin'."

Ogden had other business. That business was "Sundown" Saunders. Deputy Glascow was scared. Sundown Saunders had the rep of being the fastest gun in the Southwest. And this morning, the lanky, evil-faced Sundown walked in.

Refusing a drink, Sundown said, "Let's get to business!"

"Right," smiled Ogden. "Five hundred now, an' two thousand when you've got your man. He's been stealin' cattle, an' us law-abidin' citizens want him removed."

"Twenty-five hundred, or no guns!" snapped Saunders. "Take it or leave it!"

Five minutes later, Saunders fingered the bills. "And who is this calf-stealin' hombre?" he inquired.

"Fella called Tuscon Smith," said Ogden.

"Why, you bald-faced liar!" rapped Sundown. "I ain't never heard nothin' but good of that hombre!"

"Afraid to go up against him?" questioned Ogden with a leer.

"I'm bettin' my life he ain't faster'n me," said Sundown slowly. "An I ain't never broke my word, not even to a skunk."

WHITE dust stirred in a cloud through the one street of Los Potros. It was Saturday morning. Tuscon Smith and his companions were in town. Caroline had come in the buckboard, with the delighted Jeff as her driver by Tuscon's order. Lullaby and Stony were with Tuscon now in the Happy Days Saloon.

Tuscon Smith's forehead was creased with worry. After a frantic search, Caroline had discovered the deed of the big ranch to Manuel Tresbarro had disappeared. Tuscon had learned a copy of the deed should be on record at the courthouse in Chancellor.

But this morning, Orcham, the banker, had upset Tuscon's idea.

"That deed seems to have disappeared from Chancellor," said the banker.

"Then I'm ridin' to Chancellor personal to investigate them records," Tuscon had announced.

Back in the Happy Days, Stony said, "Tuscon, you think that Ogden has a hand in that deed thing?"

"Sure, it's that skunk," declared Lullaby.

Tuscon had noticed furtive glances as he walked through the town. Many persons appeared to avoid him abruptly. Now he saw Taggart, the blacksmith, who had wanted to see Fin Sharkey hanged.

"Glad to see you, Smith," said Taggart. "They tried to run me outta the country, and I need a job now."

"You're hired," promptly said Tuscon. "Let's have a drink."

Happy Hopkins said, "You heard the news, Tuscon? Glascow killed Fin Sharkey last night, sawin' his way outta jail, or so Glascow says."

"That's one way to kill off evidence," mused Tuscon. Then Taggart spoke up.

"Mentionin' Glascow," he said. "I run into him in the courthouse at Chancellor the other day."

Before Tuscon could reply, Sundown Saunders stood in the door of the Happy Days. He looked at Tuscon with the calculating eyes of a killer. Tuscon only glanced at him. Lullaby and Stony had their hands on their guns.

"I'm going to Chancellor right now," announced Tuscon.

Sundown stepped in front of him. "Not so fast, hombre. We've got business, gun business!"

Taggart exclaimed, "Sufferin' Moses! Sundown Saunders!"

"Who's payin' you?" rapped Tuscon, instantly.

"I don't palaver," replied Sundown, "but see how you like this."

A glass of whisky slapped in Tuscon's face. Tuscon's hand went to his gun. But Sundown kept his hands free.

Jeff had come in. He was staring with terror at the notorious killer.

Sundown said, "This town ain't big enough for both of us, Tuscon Smith. I'll expect you at sundown. I'll leave the Red Bull. You can start anywhere, but come a-shootin'."

When Sundown strode out, Jeff pulled Tuscon to one side.

"Please, Tuscon, you ain't gotta chance with him," pleaded Jeff. "You're fast, but he'll mow you down before you can reach."

"So I've heard, Kid," smiled Tuscon. "Have a drink?"

"Not me!" said Jeff. "I'm takin' this fight offa your hands."

"You're driving Caroline home right now, an' that's an order!" rapped Tuscon.

Tuscon let the keys drop.

JEFF went out reluctantly. But he did not drive Caroline home. He put the newly hired Taggart in the buckboard seat. A few minutes later, he had found Sundown Saunders behind the Red Bull Saloon.

It was a strange encounter. "When you throw war talk at Tuscon, that's my business," announced Jeff.

Sundown with half-lidded eyes inspected the excited, enraged Kid.

"Then that's your hard luck," said Sundown. "Suppose somebody got me some day—in the back—like they'd have to—— Life's nothin' but a matter of three squares a day—forty winks and a lotta powder smoke."

"You're wrong, Sundown," said Jeff. "Life can be mighty fine. Tuscon taught me that. He's too good for the gun of a dirty killer."

Sundown laughed harshly. Jeff's fist smashed the laugh into his teeth. Sundown's hand whipped out a gun. Then his piercing eyes were laid on the Kid.

"I'm overlookin' that," he said slowly. "You're only a punk, an' you ain't in your right mind. I'll be waitin' for Smith at sundown."

Seeking Jeff, who, he had learned, had not gone home, Tuscon walked into the Red Bull. Steve Ogden greeted him with a sneering, "Think you'd be home sayin' your prayers."

"There's a heap o' folks got them wrong ideas," said Tuscon.

Ogden made a mistake. Tuscon's back was turned. Ogden went for his gun. Tuscon's six-shooter was too fast for him. Then Tuscon knocked the gun from Ogden's hand.

"Get him, somebody!" yelled Ogden. "Hundred dollars to the man who does!"

One of Ogden's followers, "Chap" Bell, thought he was the man. His gun came out. Another weapon flamed. Bell's hand went limp. Then half a dozen of Ogden's men had their guns on Tuscon.

"Put them guns away!" commanded the voice of Sundown Saunders. He had shot Bell. "Smith, nobody's throwin' down on you while I'm here. An' don't thank me. I'm savin' you for later——"

TUSCON SMITH
He drew slow, but thought fast.

"I'll be seein' you," said Tuscon.

Ogden foamed, "You missed your chance, Saunders."

"I don't back shoot. You're lower than a rattler, Ogden."

THE single street of Los Potros was cleared. The sun had just touched the rim. Tuscon walked grimly from the Happy Days Saloon. His boots plopped in the white dust.

Lullaby and Stony were moaning. Tuscon had them bewildered. For he had bought two second-hand guns of small caliber. They were only .32-20s on .45 frames. And with these he was walking to meet the deadliest gunman of the Southwest.

The single street was wide open in the dusk. Sundown Saunders pushed from the Red Bull. Ogden and Glascow followed him. Tuscon was still seventy or eighty yards away. Sundown advanced, a sneering, deadly machine that couldn't miss.

Tuscon started a slow draw. Sundown's hands whipped up. His guns started flaming. To the amazement of the onlookers, the slugs went wild. Tuscon fired twice, then again. Sundown slowly turned on his heels and his head rolled in the dust.

Tuscon ran forward, kneeling beside him. Sundown managed a hard smile.

"You got me!" he gasped. "How'd you know I wasn't accurate at over fifty yards?"

"I think you'll be O. K.," said Tuscon. "Kinda figured your name of Sundown must mean something. You had to draw your men close, so you picked dusk for the job."

Lullaby, Stony and Jeff crowded close. Stony growled, "I don't getcha, Tuscon. You coulda plugged 'im for keeps!"

"Why kill a man who never had a chance?" said Tuscon. "I aim to give him one. We're takin' him to the Three-Bar-O in the wagon you fellas had fixed up to haul me home."

A WEEK later Tuscon came back from Chancellor. He had failed to find the ranch deed. But he was carrying a special deputy's badge. Sheriff Morgan had sworn him in to help right the affairs of Los Potros.

Sundown Saunders was dragging his saddle to the corral. Tuscon shook his head sadly.

"I tried to persuade him to go straight an' take a job," he said to Jeff and Caroline. "But he seems to think life's dealt him a raw hand. Yet I believe there's something to him underneath."

As Sundown Saunders slowly mounted, a horse came running from the south range. Taggart rolled off and collapsed. Blood ran from a wound in his head.

"Santone River!" he gasped. "Ogden's men are shovin' cattle over to try an' steal our water! Elliott an' Reece, another rancher, are headin' a shootin' party!"

Tuscon was moving toward his horse. Jeff ran toward him.

"This is the showdown!" rasped Tuscon. "It's range war, fellas!"

Tuscon, Lullaby and Stony, closely followed by Jeff, topped the rim of a hill above the Santone River. Tuscon saw Jake Elliott, with eight men, circling a bunch of rocks. Only Rube Phelps had been left behind by Taggart. But now, two men were in the rocks. They were holding off the attempt of Mexican riders to drive the Ogden cattle over the river.

Tuscon shouted, "Somebody's helpin' Rube hold 'em off! Circle 'em, fellas!"

The guns of Lullaby, Stony and Jeff opened a fusillade. But Elliott and the rancher, Reece, were leading a hard crowd. One outlaw pitched from his horse. Tuscon headed for the bunch of rocks. Then he said softly, "I thought so."

Sundown Saunders's paint pony was near the rocks. Sundown, who had said he wouldn't stay, had ridden to help Rube Phelps.

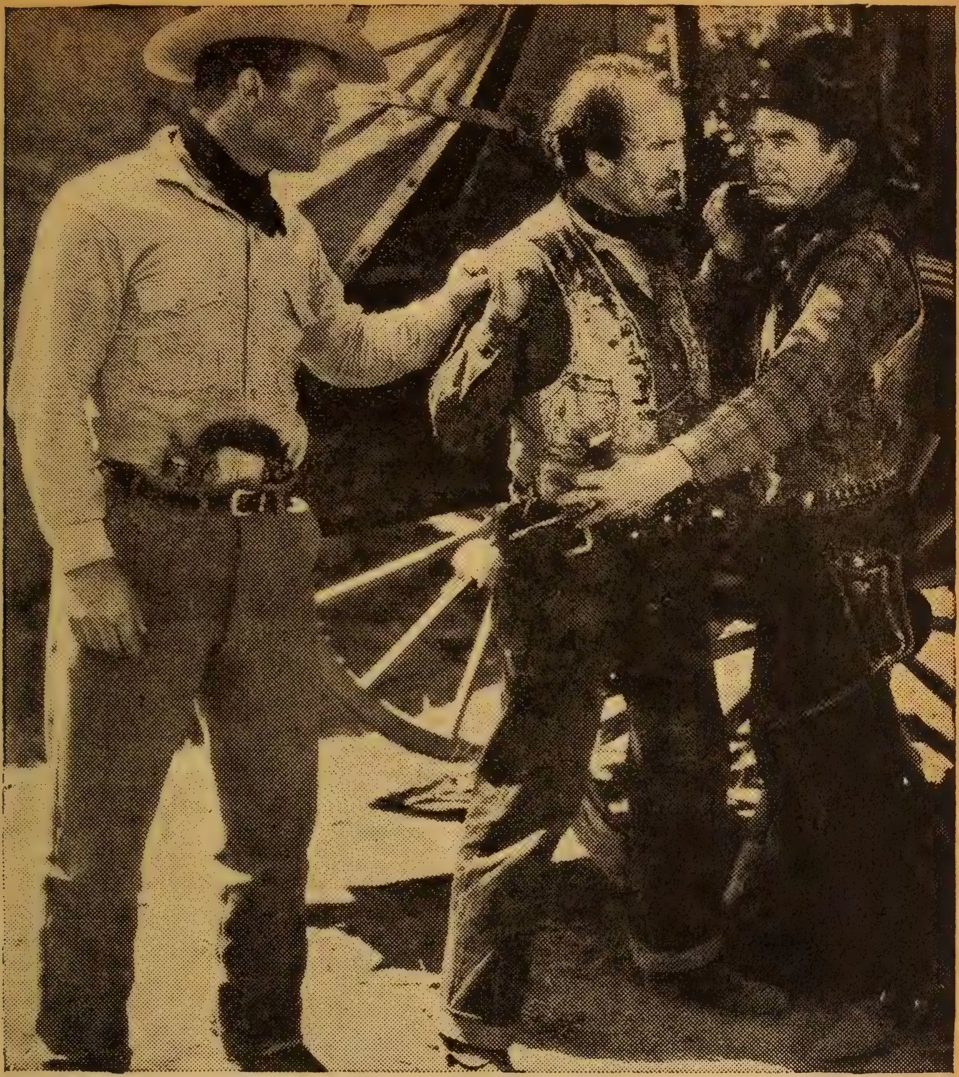
Tuscon dismounted and slid into the shelter. Lead hammered at the refuge. Mexican herders shouted. Elliott bawled, "Get that fella Smith first!"

Sundown was shooting fast. Tuscon slipped beside him.

"Thanks, Saunders," he said. "I'm sure needin' your guns now."

"Aw, hell!" grinned Saunders, then he swung an arm across Tuscon's shoulders. Sundown's body came between Tuscon and Elliott's shooting riders. Tuscon felt him go limp in his arms. Sundown had taken the bullet meant for Tuscon. And even as he fell, his own gun got the sharpshooter who had drilled him.

Lullaby, Stony and Jeff had been joined by other Three-Bar-O riders. The



Tuscon took the bandit's gun.

Mexicans were fleeing in a rout. The cattle stampeded. Elliott and Reece, the two leaders of the outlaws, were being driven, roped, to the rocks where Tuscon knelt beside Sundown.

Sundown smiled slightly.

"It's O. K., pardner," he said. "You're a white man. But I guess it just wasn't in the cards for me to stay on with you."

Jake Elliott was raging.

"Wait'll Steve Ogden hears of this! You fellas turn us loose, an' suddenlike!"

"Too bad, Elliott," drawled Tuscon Smith. "You an' Reece are under arrest for trespassin' an' murder!"

"Under arrest—what d'yuh mean?"

Tuscon palmed the badge of the deputy sheriff in his hand.

"This part of the war's all over, Elliott," he said. "We're ridin' to Los Potros."

DEPUTY GLASCOW was being shaved. The Los Potros barber was a talkative fellow.

"That Tuscon Smith's sure got what it takes," he said.

"If you're smart," snapped Glascow, "you'll not talk about that Smith hombre! It ain't healthy, understand?"

"Why ain't it?" came a slow, soft drawl.

Tuscon Smith was standing in the doorway.

"What's the idea comin' in here, interruptin' my——" began Glascow.

"Where's that deed to the Tresbarro ranch?" said Tuscon unexpectedly. "And that county deed record book?"

"Whatta y' mean?" gulped Glascow.

Tuscon said contemptuously, "I got Reece an' Ogden's crew, an' that Elliott hombre sure says somethin' when he talks."

Deputy Glascow swallowed the bait.

"Jake wouldn't dare——" Then he caught himself and jumped from the chair. "I don't know what you're talkin' about! I'm goin' to see Steve Ogden!"

"That can wait!" snapped Tuscon. "The Ogden coyotes were trespassin' an' I put 'em under arrest!"

"I'm the only man can make arrests in Los Potros," sneered Glascow. "You'd better let those men go or——"

He stopped, staring at the deputy's badge in Tuscon's hand.

"Just a little present from Sheriff Morgan," drawled Tuscon. "Now gimme them jail keys."

Glascow took the keys from his pocket. He moved as if to pass them over, then his hand whipped out his gun. Tuscon let the keys drop. Both guns roared. Glascow went down with a bullet in his side.

Tuscon bent over him. Stony came to the door. Tuscon tossed him the jail keys and told him to lock up Elliott and Reece.

Then Tuscon bent closer over the groaning Glascow. His gray eyes glinted and he said hurriedly, "Somebody get a doctor. He's dyin'."

Auringer and Delisle, two of Ogden's men, showed in the barber shop door. Their hands went to their guns.

Tuscon snapped around, filling his free hand.

"You fellas wantin' to take a hand?" rapped Tuscon.

"It ain't none of our business," said Auringer, nudging Delisle. The pair faded into the crowd, heading for Ogden's saloon.

Deputy Glascow murmured feebly, "Am—am I goin' to die?"

Tuscon said sadly, "I reckon so, Glascow. You—you wouldn't wanta go with a guilty conscience, wouldja? Y' oughta make a clean breast o' things!"

Glascow's voice was panicky, revengeful.

"Ogden's to blame! It's all his fault! He—he got me into this! He—he needn't think he can go scot-free—the dirty—— I tell you, Smith, he—he rustled more'n three thousan' head of Tresbarro's cattle —blotted 'em with his Box-B brand——"

"And how about the deed and the record book?"

Glascow was clinging to Tuscon's arm.

"Yeah—yeah—Ogden made me do it —he's got 'em in his safe—in the Red Bull!"

Deputy Glascow then quietly fainted.

STEVE OGDEN was in his saloon office, when his bartender rushed in.

"Boss, Smith's got Elliott and your crew locked up! Somebody said Morgan's made Smith a special deputy!"

Auringer and Delisle pounded up the stairs. Auringer was hoarse with excitement.

"Boss, Smith just shot Glascow—an' that yellow snake's spillin' everything he knows! Delisle an' me's driftin'. We ain't aimin' to be caught in no cleanup."

Ogden poured himself a stiff drink.

"You can't run," he said thickly. "You fellas stick an' get Smith, an' I'll make it worth while."

"Y' mean you want us to get Smith?" said Auringer scornfully. "You must be thinkin' of two other hombres. We're on our way."

"Wait—wait——" pleaded Ogden. "I've got three thousand dollars in the safe back of me. That amount says you can do it. One shot a piece would be enough."

"O. K.! We'll do it then!" said Auringer. "Shell out!"

In the meantime, the doctor was in the barber shop. He examined Deputy Glascow.

"He ain't hurt so bad," the doctor said.

"Nope," grinned Tuscon. "I didn't 'low to plug him for keeps. He'll live to serve a jail sentence."

Deputy Glascow's eyes blinked rapidly. He sat up, looking at Tuscon with accusing eyes.

"You—you said I was dyin'!"

Tuscon smiled at him grimly, and said, "You were going to see Steve Ogden. Reckon I'll take over that little chore for you."

TUSCON SMITH strode alone into the Red Bull Saloon. The bartender was starting to load a shotgun. The shells clattered to the floor.

"Your boss up in his office?" demanded Tuscon.

"I—I guess so!"

Tuscon looked at the shotgun contemptuously.

"We're rounding up the undesirables here in Los Potros," he said. "We ain't got anything definite against you, but take my advice an' drift."

"But—but——"

"I said *drift!*"

"Y-y-yes, sir!"

Tuscon Smith catfooted into the upper hallway. At the top of the stairs he drew back cautiously to listen.

He heard Ogden's voice say, "He'll be headin' this way any minute. It'll be a cinch!"

Tuscon drew both his guns. He stepped lithely past the office door and whirled suddenly.

"Ogden! Come out! It's Smith! You're under arrest!"

Inside the office room, Ogden motioned Auringer and Delisle to be ready. They crouched, prepared to shoot.

"You arrest me? What for?" came Ogden's voice.

"Murder—rustlin'—the list is too long to repeat," said Tuscon. "I got it all from Glascow."

Inside, Auringer and Delisle were ready to blast the door at the instant the knob turned.

"You comin' quiet," said Tuscon, "or do I have to come after you?"

Ogden had edged out of possible gunfire.

"I reckon you'll have to come in!"

Tuscon's body was close to the wall, away from the door. He exclaimed, "That's one welcome job, Ogden!"

His long, lanky arm stretched. His hand reached the doorknob and turned it slowly.

Fast explosions reverberated inside the room. Bullets blasted splinters from the door panels. Tuscon grinned as the slugs riddled the wood.

At the foot of the stairs, a crowd surged into the Red Bull. Tuscon's warning hand motioned all back. Tuscon suddenly groaned deeply. One of his feet dragged the floor, as if he had fallen.

The shooting ceased. Ogden was talking.

"We got him all right; take a look!"

The door opened a few inches. A gun barrel appeared. Delisle's cautious face followed it. Auringer was just behind him. Then Auringer was looking straight into the icy gray eyes of Tuscon Smith.

"Look out!" he yelled. "Get back!"

Delisle's gun belched fire. Tuscon sprang to one side, both guns talking at once. Delisle clasped his hands over his stomach, spun around and plunged head foremost down the stairs. Tuscon's guns spewed bullets into Ogden's office.

Auringer was down. Tuscon stepped in. He was looking toward the safe. From behind a table, Ogden started shooting. The volley struck Tuscon squarely in the back. He pitched to the floor, writhing with agony.

Ogden sprang for the door. Tuscon's teeth ground together. Blood leaked over his lips. But a single bullet sang from a gun that almost immediately fell from Tuscon's hand.

Steve Ogden screamed in mortal pain. He rolled over and over down the stairs. At the bottom his head twisted queerly. He was dead.

Lullaby, Stony and Jeff pounded up the steps.

The Guadalupe Kid had a sob in his throat.

"They couldn't—he couldn't—not Tuscon—not Tuscon——"

Lullaby had Tuscon's head in his arms. There seemed no life in the bullet-riddled body. Tears stood in the eyes of the hard-boiled Stony Brooke.

"If there was only somebody left to get for that!" he muttered.

A SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA sun bathed the ranch house of the Three-Bar-O. Pretty Caroline Sibley watched a doctor putting away his instruments. Her hand touched the shoulder of the white-faced man in a wheel chair.

"Ain't no use in me comin' out here any more," chuckled the doctor.

Tuscon Smith said, "I'm owin' a heap to you an' Caroline, doc."

"All I done was fish slugs outta you," said the doctor. "Don't get messed up like that again."

"I don't reckon it'll be necessary," said Tuscon.

"Not after the way you've cleaned up hereabouts."

Caroline was tucking the blankets around Tuscon. Jeff came around the corner of the house.

Tuscon glanced at him, then he said, "Well, what'll I do for a nurse, Caroline, when you go East?"

"I—I'm not goin'," murmured Caroline.

"Y' hear that?" said Tuscon dryly, nodding to Jeff. "Well, whatta y' waitin' for? I told doc to send out a preacher."

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IT ALWAYS HAPPENS

An ANDY CLYDE Comedy, produced by Columbia Pictures.

CAST:

Andy Clyde, Geneva Mitchell, Esther Howard, Bud Jamieson,
Arthur Houseman, Esther Muir.

(Editor's Note: Through the kindness of Columbia Pictures, we have arranged to show you here what movies look like before they are even started in production, when they are still in manuscript form. Certain of the terms used in the following script will need explaining.)

First, each shot is written as a complete scene and numbered separately. There are two general kinds of shots—exterior and interior, referring to whether the scene is to take place in or out of doors; they are abbreviated EXT. or INT.

A TWO SHOT is a scene with only two people. A THREE SHOT, three. And so on.

Shots are FULL, SEMI FULL, LONG, MEDIUM, or CLOSE, depending on the scope. A shot of a room showing several people, would be a FULL SHOT. A shot of only a clock would be a CLOSE SHOT. Each shot must always be described.

When the camera turns to follow something in motion, it is making a PAN SHOT (short for "panorama").

When a camera moves—not merely turns, but moves closer to or farther away from an object—it is a TRUCKING SHOT or DOLLY SHOT.

Sometimes a scene ends and the next scene is a different location, the change being made by a WIPE OFF or LAP DISSOLVE. This is the same effect as sliding one picture over another. There is no FADE OUT, no BLACK OUT, no cessation of action. When the change is made by simply following one shot with another without any trick photography, it is shown by CUT TO.

A PROCESS SHOT is made by photographing a moving background and projecting it on a glass screen behind the characters who are photographed in the studios. The effect is that the players are moving with the background when, in reality, they are standing still in the studios. This is most frequently used in the case of automobile and airplane sequences. It is also known as a DUNNING SHOT, named after its inventor.

FADE IN: (DAY)

1 *EXT. HARDWARE STORE—FULL SHOT*

It is a nice little country store. The window reads:

ANDREW CLYDE
Hardware, Paints & Farming
Implements

Andy comes out carrying a suitcase. He is hurried and excited as he starts toward his sedan, parked at the curb. Mrs. Clyde follows. She is a homely woman of forty-five. Andy puts down his suitcase and turns to her.

2 *TWO SHOT*

Andy wipes his mouth with the back of his hand.

ANDY: Goodbye, Ma. Take care of the store.

He kisses her.

MA: Goodbye, Andy. Take care of yourself.

ANDY: Sure I will, and don't forget to wire the Palace Hotel to reserve a room for me.

He turns away quickly and stumbles over the suitcase. He nearly falls but saves himself, then laughs at his own folly.

ANDY: I'll break my neck before I ever get to Los Angeles.

3 *SEMI FULL SHOT*

He picks up the suitcase and starts away on the run, changes his mind, runs back and kisses Ma again, who laughs a little shakily, then Andy runs to the car. He throws in the suitcase and climbs behind the wheel.

4 *CLOSE SHOT*

Ma waves goodbye.

5 *SEMI FULL SHOT*

Andy gives a toot-toot with the horn, then looks back and waves. At the same time he lets in the clutch.

PAN WITH HIM as the car shoots forward and climbs the ramp of a huge storage van waiting to receive a load. Andy backs out and drives away.

6 *MED. SHOT*

Ma, as Jane, Andy's step daughter enters carrying shopping bundles. Jane strides up to Ma, who is looking off after Andy.

JANE: Where's Andy going, Mother?

MA: To Los Angeles. He's getting the agency for the Angleworm Tractors, here in Visalia.

Jane puts her arms akimbo and snaps:

JANE: Do you mean to tell me you'll let him stay in town overnight alone! Mother, you'll never learn sense!

MA: He's not like your husband was, dear.

JANE: They're all the same. I wouldn't trust a man as far as I can see, and I'm near-sighted.

MA: I won't have you talking like that about your step-father.

JANE: Just the same we're going to town and keep an eye on him.

They turn to enter the store, as Jane adds:

Get your things packed. We'll take the ten-thirty train.

Ma stops to let the awning down.

MA: Oh, Jane, Andy's too old to do anything wrong.

JANE: They're never too old.

She looks at her mother grimly, as Ma lets go the awning string. A deluge of water from awning douses Jane.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

7 *INT. OFFICE DOOR—CLOSEUP*
A glass-paneled door on which is printed:

ANGLEWORM TRACTOR CO.,
Western Division
Edward Smith, Manager

TRUCK UP THROUGH DOOR

8 *INT. SECRETARY'S OFFICE—SEMI FULL SHOT*
A girl secretary is at her desk. The phone rings and she picks it up.

GIRL: Hello. . . . Yes, Mr. Smith.

9 *HOTEL ROOM—*
INT. SMITH'S LIVING ROOM—SEMI FULL SHOT
Smith, a big man about forty is on the phone, while Blanche, his wife, a stunning blonde, is packing an overnight bag.

SMITH: I'm expecting a Mr. Clyde from Visalia. When he comes in, tell him I had to rush to San Diego and I'll see him to-morrow at two. . . . Yes—good-bye.

He hangs up and turns to Mrs. Smith.

MRS. SMITH: All ready, dear.

She closes the suitcase. He picks it up and with one arm about his wife, they go to the door and stop to kiss.

10 *INT. CORRIDOR—MED. LONG SHOT*
A bellboy comes along. Andy comes from his room.

ANDY *(to boy)*: Can you tell me where the Angleworm Tractor Building is?

BOY: Turn to the right where you go out and down two blocks.

ANDY: Thanks.

He exits down corridor and boy goes on. Smith's door opens and he and his wife come out.

MRS. SMITH *(smiling):* Goodbye, dear, and be a good boy.

SMITH: Don't worry, honey. I'll get the first plane back in the morning.

He kisses her goodbye and exits hurriedly.

11 *EXT. HOTEL—MED. SHOT*
Andy comes out and starts for his car. A drunk is gazing at the car window on which is a sticker:

VISIT
VISALIA COUNTY FAIR

Andy enters to the drunk.

ANDY: Anything wrong?

JOE: Thish your car?

ANDY: Front seat, yes—back seat, no. That's my step-daughter's.

JOE: I'm from Visalia too. Shake.

Joe straightens up, makes a pass at Andy's hand, misses it and catches him around the neck to keep from falling.

ANDY: Steady, steady.

JOE: We gotta celebrate this. Come on and have a drink.

12 *TWO SHOT*
Andy tries to release himself.

ANDY: Thanks, but I don't drink.

JOE: Then you're not from Visalia.

Andy releases himself. Joe throws his arm around Andy's neck, saying:

Jesh one li'l drink for good old Visalia. Come on.

Joe hugs Andy so tight they nearly fall together, but Andy gets Joe on his feet. He looks anxiously around. Joe hangs on and together they stagger toward the revolving hotel door. Andy breaks away and starts to run. Joe grabs him and drapes himself around Andy.

JOE: Be a good sport . . . one li'l teeny-weeny drink with your ol' palsy.

13 *MED. CLOSE SHOT*
Andy and Joe.

ANDY: Will you leave me alone!

JOE: What—in a strange city? Certainly not! Never!

14 *MED. LONG SHOT*
Andy tries to get away from Joe by going into the hotel. As he starts through the revolving door, Joe grabs the opposite leaf and holds the door. Andy tries to push through but Joe is too strong and succeeds in pushing his side so that Andy comes back out, backward.

15, 16, 17 to 22
Ad lib routine of Andy trying to

go through the revolving doors, but Joe foils all his attempts. Cover thoroughly with CLOSE-UPS.

23 *MED. SHOT AT REVOLVING DOORS*
Andy is burned up. He swings a haymaker at Joe. Joe staggers and falls, just as a policeman steps through the door—the swing timed so that it misses Joe and hits the cop. He grabs Andy.

COP: Assaulting an officer, eh?

ANDY: It was an accident, officer.

Joe staggers up.

JOE: Don't pay any attention to him, officer. He's drunk.

ANDY: I don't drink. I'm just here on business.

COP: Yeah. Buying a distillery on the installment plan. Come on!

He jerks Andy away, expostulating.

24 *CLOSE SHOT JOE*
He weaves and calls after Andy.

JOE: Hey! They can't put you in jail for that.

WIPE OFF TO:

25 *INT. JAIL BOOKING ROOM—MED. SHOT*
Shooting through a barred door. Andy is at the desk being booked. DOLLY BACK to take in desk sergeant and clerk, the latter with phone.
Andy is on the verge of tears.

CLERK: Okay. *(hands phone to Andy)* Here's your number. And don't talk any language we don't understand.

Andy nervously takes the phone.

ANDY: Hello? Angleworm Tractor Company? This is Andrew Clyde. I—I am being detained by——

26 *INT. SECRETARY'S OFFICE—MED. CLOSE*
The secretary is on the phone.

GIRL: Oh, Mr. Clyde. Mr. Smith was called out of town and would like to see you at two o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

27 *INT. BOOKING ROOM—MED. CLOSE*
Andy on phone. He is immensely relieved.

ANDY: That's fine. I'll be in . . . I mean out . . . I mean up to see him then.

He hangs up.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN: (DAY)
28 *INT. ANDY'S ROOM—SEMI FULL SHOT*
Ma and Jane are sitting, waiting. Jane is grim, but Ma gives a sniffle.

MA: Nearly eight o'clock in the morning and no sign of him yet.

29. *CLOSEUP JANE*

JANE: I told you—they're all alike. If it isn't drink, it's women, and if it isn't one or the other—it's both.

30 *CLOSEUP MA*

MA *(tearfully):* To think I married a Don Juan.

31 *INT. CORRIDOR—MED. LONG SHOT*
Andy comes slowly along, his head down. The door across the hall is thrown open by an excited blonde (Mrs. Smith), who is just drawing her negligee about her. Andy gives a start.

MRS. SMITH: Oh! I'm looking for the janitor. My phone won't work, and my bath's flooding.

ANDY: My goodness!

MRS. SMITH: I wonder if you could shut it off for me?

ANDY: What—the phone?

MRS. SMITH: No—the water.

Andy hurries into the Smiths' apartment, and she follows, closing the door.

32 *LONG SHOT CORRIDOR*
Ma and Jane peer through their door into the hall, a split second after Andy and Mrs. Smith have made their exit into the Smith apartment.

MA: I could have sworn I heard Andy's voice.

JANE: Me, too.

33 *INT. BEDROOM—MED. SHOT AT BATHROOM DOOR*
Andy and Mrs. Smith enter. Mrs. Smith goes to the far side and stops, looking in frantically. Andy looks in and starts back with an exclamation.
The water is still pouring into the tub, which is overflowing, and the floor is all awash.

34 *SEMI FULL SHOT*
Andy is throwing off his coat, and now he pulls off his shoes.

ANDY: What a night this has been!

MRS. SMITH: Are you just getting home?

ANDY *(nodding):* Would you believe it, they arrested me for being drunk—me, that's never had a drink in my life.

He steps barefooted into the bathroom, and Mrs. Smith watches him through the doorway. He steps on a cake of soap and sits down hard. He gets up and starts to shut off the water.

35 *INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR—FULL SHOT AT ELEVATOR*
The elevator door opens and the porter steps out, slamming the elevator door behind him. He has a mop and starts to mop the linoleum.

36 *INT. ANDY'S ROOM—MED. SHOT*
Ma is sitting, suffering. Jane is looking out of the window. They hear the elevator door and jump up.

MA: There's someone. Maybe it's Andy.

They start toward the door.

37 *INT. CORRIDOR—MED. LONG SHOT*
In foreground, Ma and Jane come to the door and peer out. The opposite apartment door opens and Andy comes out. He stops in the doorway facing Mrs. Smith—but we see he has on one of her silk kimonos, with ostrich feather collar. In his hands he carries his shoes, while his coat is slung across his arm.

38 *CLOSEUP MA AND JANE*
They react,, horrified.

39 *MED. CLOSEUP—ANDY AND MRS. SMITH*

ANDY: Do you think I ought to tell my wife where I spent the night?

MRS. SMITH: Certainly not. What she doesn't know will never hurt her.

40 *CLOSEUP MA AND JANE*
They react, horrified. Then exit menacingly. PAN WITH THEM across the hall, where Andy is leaving Mrs. Smith. As he tips his hat and turns, there stands Ma and Jane. Andy almost hits the floor as he reacts.

41 *CLOSEUP MA AND ANDY*

ANDY: Ma! Where did you come from?

MA: You'd better start explaining.

Andy starts to stammer and stutter.

42 *MED. CLOSEUP—ANDY, MA AND JANE*

ANDY: Well you see, Ma, I was in all night—I mean, I got out this morning. That is, I was fixin' her bathtub, see——? *(indicating his wet trousers)* I'm all wet.

JANE *(sarcastically)*: You're telling me!

She turns menacing on Mrs. Smith.

MRS. SMITH: That's true. I couldn't get the porter.

43 *CLOSE SHOT*
The porter gives a loud laugh.

CUT TO:

44 *MED. LONG SHOT*
Ma turns to Andy, takes one of the shoes from his hand and bats him over the head with it. As Andy starts down the hall protesting his innocence, Ma follows him, lambasting him with the shoe.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

45 *TRAVELING SHOT (PROCESS: IN HEART OF SHOPPING DISTRICT*
Andy is driving his car while Ma and Jane are in the rear seat. Andy is pleading with Ma.

ANDY: Honest, Ma, I'm telling the truth. I'm as innocent as a newborn babe.

JANE: Are they being born that way now?

MA: You can just save your breath, Mr. Clyde. We'll be at the lawyer's office in a minute, and you can tell it all to him.

46 *CLOSEUP ANDY (PROCESS)*
Dejected.

ANDY *(dramatically):* Well, Ma, I suppose it's all off. All our dreams of happiness—all the little pictures we painted for ourselves, gone—shattered. No birds will be twittering for us in the morning, and that rose-covered cottage that we were going to build will remain a pile of lumber, and there'll be no little baby feet pattering around the house.

47 *CLOSEUP MA (PROCESS)*
She is beginning to sniffle; she can't stand it. Suddenly she breaks into tears.

MA: Stop it, Andy, you old fool! I can't leave you!

48 *CLOSEUP ANDY (PROCESS)*
His spirits rise like a barometer.

ANDY: Gee, Ma, you ain't gonna divorce me then?

49 *MED. SHOT (PROCESS)*
Andy slaps on the brake and dives over the front seat into Ma's arms. Frantically, he begins to shower her with kisses, and they sit there necking like two young adolescents out on their first spree.

50 *EXT. STREET—LONG SHOT*
showing that Andy has his car parked in the middle of a very busy intersection. Traffic is jammed around the car. Pedestrians are gazing at Andy and Ma. The tumult has no significance to them.

51 *CLOSEUP POLICEMAN*
frantically blowing his whistle.

52 *CLOSEUP ANDY AND MA (PROCESS)*
Andy continues to shower Ma with kisses and we now see Andy's face with imprints of red lips all over it where Ma has returned his kisses. Andy waxes flowery again for a second.

ANDY: Gee, Ma, I can hear the birds whistling again.

53 *CLOSEUP JANE (PROCESS)*

JANE *(sarcastically):* Sounds like a traffic cop to me.

54 *MED. THREE SHOT (PROCESS)*
Andy snaps out of it as he realizes the situation. Quickly, he jumps into the front seat, followed closely by Ma. As the car starts out, TRUCK WITH THEM. Andy's spirits are high and his purse-strings have been touched. Whipping out a roll of bills from his pocket, he hands them to Ma.

ANDY: Here, Ma, we'll make this a second honeymoon. Go buy yourself some new clothes.

Ma throws her arms around Andy and gives him another kiss.

ANDY: I'll run up to the tractor office and get my business taken care of and

I'll meet you at Gudes Department Store in an hour.

LAP DISSOLVE:

55 *INT. ANGLEWORM TRACTOR OFFICE*
Smith and Andy are seated.

SMITH: Of course, Mr. Clyde, I had no idea you were a middle-aged man. You know, it takes young blood to sell tractors—good-looking young fellows who can sell a tractor to the farmer's wife whether the farmer wants it or not.

56 *CLOSEUP ANDY*
He gets worried. Suddenly a thought strikes him.

ANDY: Well, Mr. Smith, I may not look it to you, but believe me I'm a humdinger with the women. Why, this very morning my wife caught me coming out of a woman's apartment.

SMITH *(jovially)*: Now don't tell me you were trying to sell her a tractor!

ANDY: Believe me, I could have sold her one. Confidentially, Mr. Smith, she fell for me like a ton of bricks.

SMITH: Was she pretty?

ANDY: I'll say she was. And the way she showered kisses on me—oo la la—*(he leans closer to Smith)* I'm going to meet her when I leave here.

He laughs and pokes Smith in the ribs.

SMITH: Maybe I misjudged you, Clyde. *(He pauses.)* I'll take a chance on you.

He signs contract and hands it to Andy.

ANDY: Oh, you'll never regret it, and don't be surprised when you see a lot of farmers' wives driving Angleworm Tractors.

SMITH: That's okay as long as you don't try to sell my wife a tractor.

ANDY: Oh, you're married?

SMITH: You bet I am. And if I ever caught anyone monkeying around my wife, I'd kill him! *(He leans toward Clyde)* You know, Clyde, I've got a terrible temper and when I get jealous, I go mad.

ANDY: I'll steer clear of your wife. *(Laughingly)* You can bet on that.

They shake hands and Clyde leaves.

WIPE TO:

57 *EXT. OF BUILDING—FULL SHOT*
As Clyde approaches his car, he almost bumps into Mrs. Smith, who is just stepping up on the sidewalk, evidently going up to her husband's office. She recognizes Andy.

MRS. SMITH: Oh, hello.

Andy reacts as if he were burnt by a hot iron.

ANDY: You again?

MRS. SMITH: I only stopped to tell you how sorry I am about the trouble I got you into this morning.

ANDY *(nervously)*: That's all right. It's O. K. But you'd better leave. If my wife should see us talking together she'd never believe me a second time.

With that, Andy jumps into the car and slams the door.

INSERT: THE OPEN DOOR as it catches the hem of Mrs. Smith's dress and wedges it in as the door closes.

58 *MED. SHOT*
Andy tips his hat and starts to drive away, ripping the dress off Mrs. Smith, who screams. Andy stops the car and turns just in time to see Mrs. Smith hurriedly open the rear door of car and climb in.

59 *CLOSEUP ANDY*
The shock of seeing Mrs. Smith unclad nearly floors him. She grabs the dress from the door and lifts it.

MRS. SMITH: You fool! You've torn my dress to ribbons!

ANDY: Y-you can't stay in here like that. S-suppose my wife should come?

MRS. SMITH: Your wife! What if my husband saw us?

ANDY: Oh my, oh my! You *have* a husband!

MRS. SMITH: Quick! Take this dress into that shop and have them repair it.

Andy grabs the dress and starts toward the dress shop. CAMERA PANS WITH HIM as he goes.

WIPE TO:

60 *EXT. DRESSMAKER SHOP—MED. SHOT ANDY*
He comes out of the dressmaker's shop with the dress rolled up. He looks fearfully about and concealing the dress under his coat, starts sneaking across the sidewalk, when he bumps into Smith, who steps out of the next building.

SMITH: Hello, Clyde. How's everything?

ANDY: It's terrible! Listen——

He looks nervously around and his eyes pop open with fear as off stage he sees his wife and stepdaughter.

CUT TO:

61 *EXT. STREET—MED. SHOT (REVERSE ANGLE)*
Ma and Jane are coming along the sidewalk with bundles. Looking ahead, Ma sees Andy and exclaims delightedly.

MA: Jane, there's Andy now!

They hurry forward.

62 *EXT. STREET—SEMI FULL SHOT*
Andy has grabbed Smith and is dragging him to the car.

ANDY: Come on, quick! We gotta get out of here!

Smith doesn't know what it's all about, but allows Andy to drag him towards the car.

63 *CLOSE SHOT ON CAR*
As Mrs. Smith peeps out, she gives a frightened look and ducks.

64 *SEMI FULL SHOT*
Andy drags Smith into the front seat beside him and starts away immediately. As the car leaves the curb, Ma and Jane hurry into scene and stop aghast at the strange actions of Andy running away from them.

MA *(shouting):* Andy!

65 *REVERSE ANGLE ON BACK OF CAR*
as it drives away. Mrs. Smith's face appears at the back window, looking out, frightened. She ducks down.

66 *TWO SHOT MA AND JANE*
Ma turns a blank look on Jane, who purses her lips grimly.

MA *(tearfully):* It's that same blond hussy—in Andy's car!

JANE *(sarcastically):* He's probably going up to fix her plumbing again. *(Grimly)* Come on!

67 *RUNNING INSERT (PROCESS)*
Andy and Smith in front seat of car.

SMITH: Who was that calling you?

ANDY: That's my wife!

SMITH: Then why didn't you pick her up?

ANDY: Pick her up! You know that girl I was telling you about in the office?

SMITH: Yeah. What about her?

68 *CLOSEUP MRS. SMITH IN TONNEAU*
She sees a hat pin stuck through an old bonnet of Ma's and picks it up during the following dialogue over scene:

ANDY'S VOICE: Well, I just bumped into her and she's in the——

Mrs. Smith jabs the hat pin through the front seat just about where Andy would be seated.

69 *CLOSEUP ANDY AND SMITH*
As they drive along. Andy lets out a yell as he feels the hat pin jabbing him in the rear. Smith looks at him askance.

SMITH: What's the idea?

Andy is at a loss to explain.

ANDY: Something bit me.

SMITH: Well, what did you want me for?

ANDY: Well, as I started to tell you, just as I was getting into the car, I bumped into this gal and she told me she's got a husband.

SMITH: So what?

ANDY: Well, she's right in the——

CUT TO:

70 *CLOSEUP MRS. SMITH IN REAR OF CAR*
She has overheard the foregoing conversation. Again she jabs Andy with the hat pin.

71 *CLOSEUP ANDY*
Again he hollers. Smith looks at him.

SMITH: Say, what's the matter with you anyway?

ANDY: I must be sitting on a tack.

While Smith is looking under Andy for the tack, Andy happens to glance up in the rear sight mirror. His eyes pop open.

INSERT: REAR SIGHT MIRROR
In it we see reflected the bare arm of Mrs. Smith, holding up an old "For Rent" sign on which she has written in heavy crayon:

"You fool! That's my husband!"

72 *CLOSEUP ANDY*
He nearly swallows his tongue as he reacts. Forgetting himself, he lets go of the wheel and turns around. Smith looks up just in time, and yells as he sees——

CUT TO:

73 *PROCESS SHOT*
A truck crosses in front of them, and they just miss it by the fraction of an inch.

74 *CLOSEUP SMITH AND ANDY*
Smith is disturbed.

SMITH: Say, you'd better look where you're going.

Suddenly Andy remembers the dress. As Smith keeps his eyes glued on the road fearing Andy might give him another thrill, his attention is diverted from Andy. Andy quickly pulls the dress from his coat and holds it out of the side of the car, trying to attract Mrs. Smith's attention to it.

75 *MED. LONG SHOT (Showing side of car)*
The dress is waving in the wind.

76 *EXT. STREET—CLOSE SHOT OF A DOG*
It looks off scene, gives a bark, and exits.

77 *EXT. STREET—RUNNING SHOT OF ANDY'S CAR*
The dress is flying in the wind as the dog comes running in, grabs the dress and yanks it from Andy's hand.

78 *CLOSEUP ANDY*
He breathes a sigh of relief thinking Mrs. Smith has grabbed the dress. Slowly, he turns around and looks in the tonneau, then turns back as he takes it—looks out the side of car and nearly faints as he sees——

79 *EXT. STREET—MED. SHOT*
The dog is standing in the street, shaking the dress to pieces.

80 *INT. CAR—CLOSE SHOT ANDY AND SMITH (PROCESS)*
Andy takes it terrified, and Smith lets out a yell. Smith, who is looking straight ahead yells again.

Andy looks forward and swings the wheel.

81 *FRONT SHOT (FROM ANDY'S ANGLE) (PROCESS)*
Andy just misses a couple of cars.

82 *INT. CAR—TWO SHOT SMITH AND ANDY (PROCESS)*

SMITH *(turning to Andy):* What's the matter with you, you look as though you've seen a ghost.

ANDY: Oh—oh! Y-you don't know the half of it!

Smith turns again, looking forward, then lets out another yell. grabbing the wheel and giving it a yank.

83 *FRONT SHOT (PROCESS)*
As Andy's car just misses a big truck.

84 *TWO SHOT SMITH AND ANDY*

SMITH *(now thoroughly scared at Andy's driving):* Say, are you drunk?

ANDY: C-certainly not! I mean—y-yes—sure! Whoopee!

He starts to swing the wheel backward and forward.

85 *FRONT SHOT (FROM ANDY'S ANGLE) (PROCESS)*
He misses street cars, pedestrians, automobiles, etc.

86 *CLOSE SHOT SMITH AND ANDY (PROCESS)*

Smith is terrified as he frantically grabs the seat and closes his eyes. He opens them as the car swerves, and turns to Andy.

SMITH: W-wait a minute. I'll get out here.

Andy, greatly relieved, brings the car to a stop.

87 *EXT. STREET—MED. SHOT (PROCESS)*
Andy's car stops at the curb. Smith jumps out, Andy steps on the gas, and tears out of scene, fifty miles per hour taking a turn on two wheels.

88 *CLOSE SHOT SMITH*
looking after Andy's car, in amazement.

CUT TO:

89 *CLOSE RUNNING SHOT ANDY (PROCESS)*
Mrs. Smith raises her head above the back seat.

MRS. SMITH: Where is my dress?

ANDY: I tried to give it to you but a dog grabbed it.

MRS. SMITH: You idiot! Do you ever do anything but make a mess of things? Drive to the hotel and bring me down something to put on!

As she says this, she takes her room key from her purse and hands it to Andy.

WIPE TO:

90 *INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR—MED. LONG SHOT*
Andy tiptoes quickly along to the Smiths' door, looks around to see that he is unobserved, then un-

locks the door and enters. As the door closes behind Andy, the elevator door in background opens, and Smith steps out. He comes quickly along the corridor.

91 *INT. SMITH'S LIVING ROOM—MED. SHOT*
Andy is sneaking quickly back to the front door with a lady's coat, but just as he reaches it, we hear Smith insert the key in the lock. Andy takes it, terrified, dashes for the bedroom; just as he disappears, Smith comes into the room.

92 *INT. BEDROOM—MED. SHOT*
Andy is standing in the middle of the floor, shaking like a trapped rat. From off stage comes Smith's voice:

> SMITH'S VOICE *(calling):* Oh, Blanche!

Andy gives a terrified gasp and dashes for the bathroom. He just closes the door as Smith enters the room. He looks around and goes over to the bathroom door. He tries it and finds it locked.

93 *INT. BATHROOM—MED. CLOSE SHOT*
Andy stands shaking. He hears the doorknob rattling.

> SMITH'S VOICE: Oh, Blanche! Are you taking a bath?

This gives Andy an idea and with a frightened relief, he quickly wheels and turns on the shower, full force.

94 *INT. BEDROOM—MED. CLOSE SHOT*
Smith at the bathroom door hears the water in the shower running and calls out:

> SMITH: Hurry, dear. I want to shave.

He sits down to wait.

95 *INT. BATHROOM — SEMI-CLOSE PAN SHOT*
Andy is shaking with fear. He looks about him then sneaks to the window; quietly opening it, and looking out.

96 *EXT. STREET*
(as seen from about the twelfth story).

97 *INT. BATHROOM—MED. SHOT*
Andy draws back, terrified.

98 *INT. CORRIDOR—MED. SHOT*
Ma and Jane come from their room.

> JANE: He's not in there so I'll bet he's in here.

She points to the Smiths' door and the two women cross. Jane knocks on the door and they wait grimly, impatient. Jane tries the door and finds it locked.

99 *INT. LIVING ROOM—MED. CLOSE SHOT*
The two women flounce into the room and at the same time, Smith comes from the bedroom. Both parties react with surprise.

> SMITH: Why — you're Mrs. Clyde, aren't you? What is it?

> MA: I'm looking for my husband.

> SMITH: He isn't here.

> JANE: Well, we caught him in here this morning with a blond woman.

> SMITH: What! My wife?

100 *INT. BEDROOM—NEAR BATHROOM DOOR*
Andy is listening and tiptoeing closer. Over scene comes Ma's voice.

MA'S VOICE: Wife or no wife, we just saw her in Andy's car!

Smith lets out a roar.

JANE'S VOICE: Do you know where she is now?

101 *INT. LIVING ROOM—GROUP SHOT*

SMITH: Yes! She's in the bathroom.

He starts for the bedroom door, followed by Ma and Jane. As they exit, the corridor door opens and Mrs. Smith enters, holding a large rubbish can like a barrel around her middle. She turns to close the door, and on the other side of can we see plainly printed "RUBBISH CAN."

102 *INT. BEDROOM—AT BATHROOM DOOR*
Smith hammers on the door and yells.

SMITH: Come out here, Blanche. I want to talk to you.

103 *INT. BATHROOM—CLOSE FLASH SHOT*
of Andy, suffering.

104 *INT. BEDROOM—CLOSE SHOT SMITH*
He again hammers on the door and yells:

SMITH: Blanche! Blanche!

105 *WIDER ANGLE*
Mrs. Smith enters from the living room now wearing a negligee.

MRS. SMITH *(quite innocently):* What is it, darling?

106 *CLOSEUP SMITH*
As he does a double take from his wife to the bathroom door.

SMITH: You! Then who's in the bathroom?

107 *GROUP SHOT*
At this, Ma and Jane, who up till now have been concealed from Mrs. Smith by the door, now step forward.

JANE *(grimly, to Smith):* Who do *you* think?

Smith takes it as the realization strikes him and he wheels viciously to the bathroom door and grabs the handle, nearly yanking it off.

SMITH *(yells):* Come out of there, Clyde, or I'll break the door down!

108 *INT. BATHROOM—MED. CLOSE SHOT ANDY*
He leans against the door, shaking in his shoes, trying to muster up courage to open it.

109 *INT. BEDROOM — SEMI FULL SHOT*
Smith runs back to make a good lunge at the door, then he charges at it with his shoulder. Just as he is about to hit the door——

110 *INT. BATHROOM—MED. SHOT*
Andy opens the door and Smith comes hurtling through right into the half-filled bathtub. As Smith flounders in the water, Andy dashes out.

111 *INT. BEDROOM — SEMI FULL SHOT*
Andy races through the bedroom, and Mrs. Smith gives a shriek.

MA: *(yells):* Oh, Andy! How could you?

112 *INT. LIVING ROOM—MED. SHOT*
Andy dashes for the door, falls over the rubbish can left by Mrs. Smith, scrambles up and dashes out of the door.

113 *INT. CORRIDOR—MED. SHOT*
A woman has just placed a double baby buggy outside her door then looking in her purse, realizes she has forgotten something and with an exclamation of annoyance, goes back into her apartment. (NOTE: This baby buggy is near the L corner of the corridor.)
As soon as the woman's door closes, Andy comes running along into scene, and stops near baby buggy, looking back fearfully.

114 *INT. LIVING ROOM—MED. SHOT*
Smith dashes to a desk, yanks open a drawer and pulls out a gun. As he does so, Mrs. Smith rushes up behind him.

MRS. SMITH: Ed! Ed! I can explain everything!

MR. SMITH *(he wheels on her furiously):* I saw everything! Or Clyde already has.

He gives her a shove. She staggers back against the garbage can, sitting down inside.

115 *CLOSE SHOT MRS. SMITH*
Doubled up in the garbage can, kicking her legs and screaming.

116 *INT. CORRIDOR—MED. LONG SHOT*
Smith comes dashing along the corridor and stops near baby buggy, looking around furiously for Andy.

117 *INT. BABY BUGGY—SHOT OF ANDY*
showing him crouched down under the blanket with a baby's cap on. He looks timidly around the edge of the hood.

118 *TWO SHOT, SMITH AND ANDY*
Andy sees that he is not discovered, and now we see that his feet are through the bottom of the buggy—on the floor. He starts to creep away with the buggy and exits scene.

119 *CORNER OF HALL—REVERSE SHOT*
We see two young children standing, one completely dressed, the other with just a diaper—Andy having taken the child's dress and cap. They are both looking off scene and as we see Andy enter, still looking back toward Smith, both children start thumbing to the baby buggy, as hitchhikers do for a ride.

120 *CLOSEUP TWO KIDS*
thumbing ride from Andy.

121 *FULL SHOT*
Andy continues past the kids and out of scene.

122 *BACK SHOT ON BABY BUGGY*
(Stairway leading down backstage). Andy, still looking back toward Smith, wheels the baby buggy to the edge of stairs and it starts out. We hear a yell from Andy as the buggy gathers mo-

mentum and disappears from upstairs.

123 *MED. SHOT*
Smith comes running into scene, looks downstairs.

124 *NEXT LANDING ON LOWER FLOOR*
Baby buggy, with Andy, continues down next flight of stairs.

125 *MED. SHOT*
Smith as he takes this, dashes for the elevator, exits inside, and we see the elevator go down.

126 *FULL SHOT OF NEXT LANDING*
(Elevator backstage and short stairway leading down to front of elevator). As we see elevator come down, we hear sound track of baby buggy coming downstairs at a terrific rate of speed, with yells from Andy. And as elevator door opens, Smith starts out and Andy comes tearing down the stairs past him, almost knocking him down, and continues out of scene.

127 *REVERSE SHOT (FROM SMITH'S ANGLE)*
Baby buggy comes in from behind camera and continues down next flight of stairs.

128 *CLOSE SHOT SMITH*
He dashes back into the elevator, slams the door and goes down to the next floor.

129 *NEXT FLOOR—FULL SHOT AT ELEVATOR*
Two men are standing with their backs to the stairs, waiting for the elevator. Andy, in the baby buggy, comes tearing down the steps, hits the men, knocking them down and continues out of scene. The men take it, scramble to their feet. As they do the elevator door opens. Smith comes dashing out, collides with them and knocks them down again. He sees that Andy is gone, jumps back into the elevator and continues on down.

130 *INT. HOTEL LOBBY—FULL SHOT AT ELEVATOR*
A porter is standing on a ladder near elevator with a bucket of water, washing the light fixtures above elevator doors. Andy comes tearing down the stairs, collides with the ladder, knocking the porter down.

131 *CLOSE WALL SHOT*
The bucket of water flies up into scene, turns over and drops down out of scene.

132 *CLOSE SHOT AT ELEVATOR DOOR*
The door is yanked open. Smith steps out just in time for the bucket to drop over his head. He struggles with it for an instant, finally yanks it off and exits scene.

133 *EXT. FRONT OF HOTEL—MED. LONG SHOT*
Andy is just coming out of the swinging door, still in the baby buggy, and tears out of scene—as Smith comes hurtling through the doors. He takes a quick look, sees Andy going down the street and exits after him.

134 *LONG SHOT (shooting down street)*
The baby buggy with Andy comes tearing in from behind camera, and continues down the street in speed shot, followed by Smith who is now shooting at Andy.

FADE OUT.

One of the pirates tore the lid off a box. . . .

CHINA SEAS

The East Gets Its Grip on Men—But Some Men Battle to Win Themselves Back!

THE *Kin Lung,* a five-thousand-ton passenger-freighter in the China seas' service, lay at dock in Hongkong. Winches squeaked and groaned as they carried the heavy cargo of freight up to the hatches. Uniformed soldiers stood at the passenger gangplank, questioning each passenger that came aboard and making sure he had no firearms.

And over it all lay the cold, dank hand of mystery.

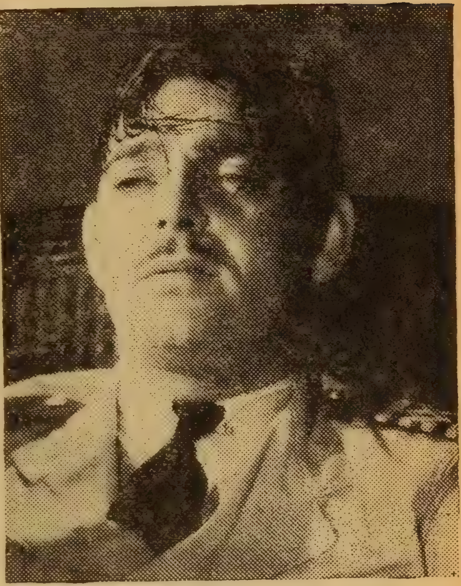
On the bridge, Captain Alan Gaskell stood looking down at the passengers coming aboard. His lean face was tense and cold. Young in years, but old in experience in those seas, was Alan Gaskell, a hard master for the men that worked under him, but a man that did the job assigned to him.

And the present job was one of his most difficult. Half a million dollars in gold was being placed on board the *Kin Lung* to be shipped to Singapore. Gold on any ship in the China seas meant blood and death, for pirates seldom let such a prize go unmolested.

Gaskell had studied each passenger. A commonplace group, on the face of it, they were. Paul Romanoff, the jewel buyer, a type that was found in every port of the Far East. J. Wilberforce Timmons and his attractive wife, from Scranton, Pennsylvania, typical American tourists.

There was a meek-looking missionary and a blond, flirtatious widow, Mrs. Vollberg. An American novelist, Charley McCaleb, in a state of chronic intoxication, had been brought aboard by a friend of Gaskell.

None of these had interested Gaskell; but there were others that did. The "China Doll," an intriguing, pretty, American girl, who had the habit of driving men mad, and who had been doing exactly that with Gaskell since he was first mate, had appeared with a round-trip ticket. Her presence would not have been so embarrassing had it not been for the fact that another woman had come aboard, Sybil Barclay, a charming English girl Gaskell had known in the days before the East had gotten its grip on him.



ALAN GASKELL

As Gaskell stood on the bridge and considered the presence of these two women and the difficulty it offered him, Sir Guy Wilmerding, managing director of the ship line, came up to him.

"I have been told, Gaskell," Sir Guy said, "that you have been sensationally blotto ever since you've been ashore."

"If you don't like my behavior ashore," Gaskell said angrily, "you can always get a new captain! In fact, I wish you would!"

A novelized version of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Picture of the same title.

The Cast

Clark Gable	Alan Gaskell
Jean Harlow	China Doll
Wallace Beery	Jamesy McArdle
Lewis Stone	Davids
Rosalind Russell	Sybil
Dudley Digges	Dawson
C. Aubrey Smith	Sir Guy
Robert Benchley	McCaleb
William Henry	Rockwell
Pat Flaherty	Kingston
Live Demaigret	Mrs. Vollberg
Lillian Bond	Mrs. Timmons
Edward Brophy	Timmons
Soo Yong	Yu-Lan
Carol Ann Beery	Carol Ann
Akim Tamiroff	Romanoff
Ivan Lebedeff	Ngah

Director: Tay Garnett
Authors: Crosbie Garstin, Jules Furthman and James Keven McGuinness

"It's this shipment of gold getting on your nerves," Sir Guy laughed. "Bull heads like you couldn't leave this service if you wanted to—— But what about this gold? Has it been brought aboard?"

"It's here, properly stored," Gaskell replied. "And I might add that I wish it was in the bottom of the sea."

Sir Guy looked down at the wharf, where native bearers in the rich livery of the house of Wing Yu-Lan were carrying two luxuriously caparisoned litters, the occupants inside hidden by silk curtains.

"The insignia of Wing Yu-Lan," Sir Guy said. "Anyway, you will have one distinguished passenger aboard—and another very charming one. Miss Yu-Lan, the daughter, would go well anywhere for beauty."

"Strange her father has never been seen by any one," Gaskell remarked.

"Almost a legend now," Sir Guy answered. "Hasn't shown his face to anybody for over ten years, but that doesn't alter the fact that everybody in the Archipelago pays dividends to him—and his brilliant mind."

GASKELL shrugged and left the bridge, going down to the steerage. A curious assortment of passengers were there. Coolies returning home, some plump houseboys, and other lean and cadaverous-looking workers, yellow skins stretched over skulls and skeleton bodies laced with strong sinews. They squatted on the hatch covers, wolfing food from bowls.

The captain made his way to where Fourth Officer Rockwell, a young Englishman, was superintending a shipment of crated hogs and chickens at the cargo hatch.

"What is this?" Gaskell asked; "a fore deck—or a barnyard?"

"Mr. McArdle's live stock, sir," Rockwell answered. "He wants to store everything himself."

McArdle stood near the hatch talking to the second officer, Kingston. He was a strange-looking man, a merchant whose reputation wasn't the best. He wore a clean linen suit a size too large, and on his fingers were diamond rings; on his tie was a gold-laced pin holding a large diamond.

"Who are you swindling with this scrub lot?" Gaskell asked.

"Why, captain," McArdle protested, "they're the finest animals I ever shipped! They won't make any noise. One pill makes them dream sweet dreams all through the voyage. And never worry away a pound."

He took a mysterious little box from his pocket, took a pill from it and inserted it into the mouth of a squealing pig.

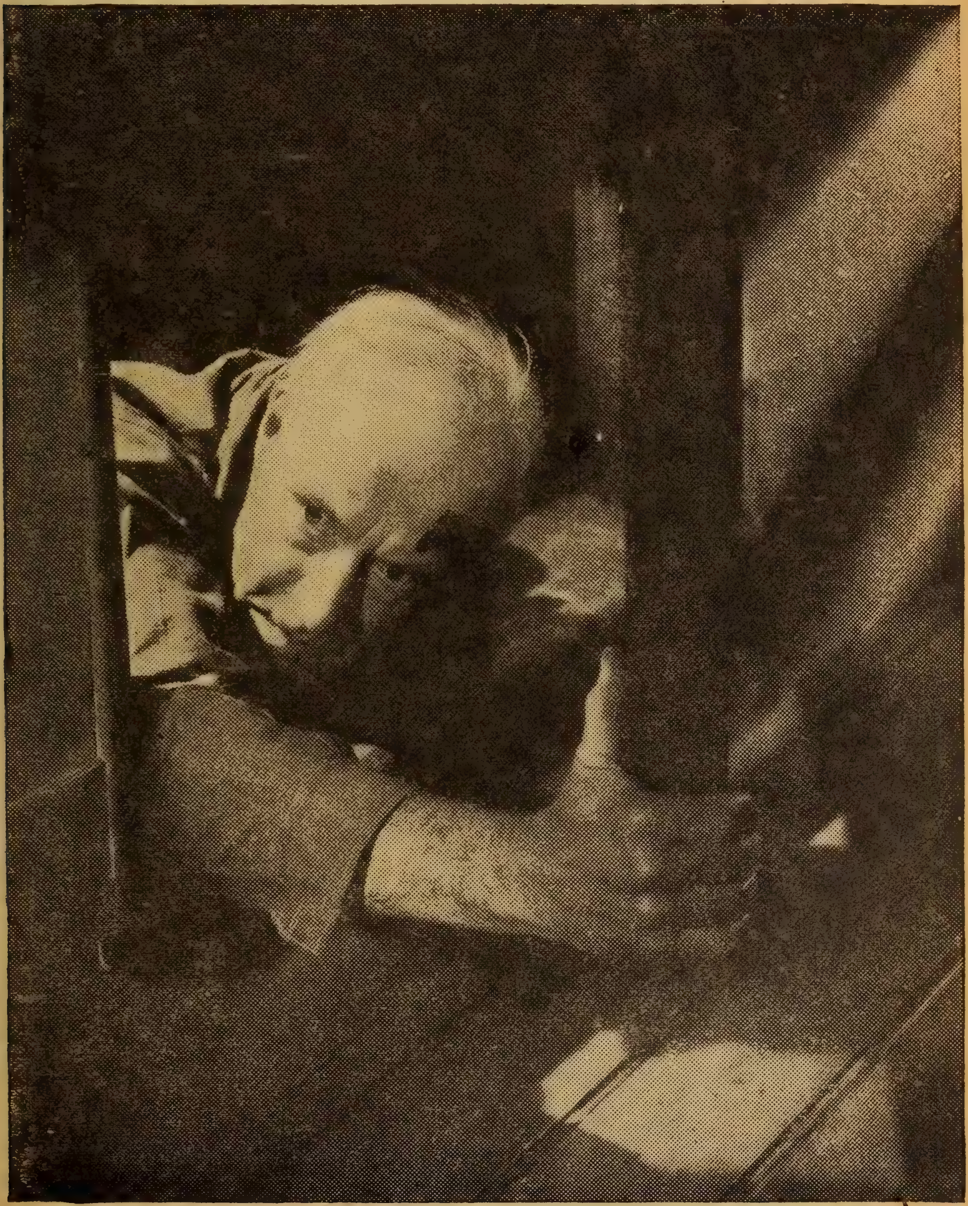
"You'll never lose even an ounce, you old reprobate," Gaskell laughed.

Then suddenly he turned. Five Chinese girls, shepherded by an old Chinaman and two aged amahs, came on the fore deck. They looked at Gaskell with sly glances.

"Nice little bouquet of lotus flowers, bound for some mandarin's palace," McArdle said. "Probably dancers."

"That's funny," Gaskell said. "They've all got natural feet."

"These are enlightened days," McArdle suggested.



He looked around in a dazed manner . . . . started crawling for a lifeboat.

"Not for singsong girls," Gaskell shot back, and then turning to Rockwell, said: "Mr. Rockwell, what does a woman do when you throw something at her?"

"A woman? She—she——"

"Dodges it—and a man will catch it," Gaskell cut in. "Here—catch!"

He tossed an unlighted cigar to the nearest girl. She put up her hands and caught it, fumbling a little, giggling nervously.

GASKELL'S jaws set like a vise.

"Sergeant of the guard!" he called, as he walked over to the nearest girl.

He ripped off her headdress. Underneath it was a man's shaved head. With a muttered curse, Gaskell tore off the top garments. and under them was a male torso, with an automatic holstered under the armpit.

The other four disguised singsong girls came to life with furious oaths, but guards surrounded them.

"Take them ashore," Gaskell ordered the guards, "and charge them with attempted piracy. Ask the police commissioner to wireless me anything he can get out of them."

Sir Guy came rushing up to Gaskell.

"What—what does this mean?" he gasped.

"Some pirate tried to smuggle five of his men aboard as singsong girls," Gaskell answered. "And it means that he has already smuggled others aboard, because no pirate would try to take the gold with only five men."

"It looks," Sir Guy remarked casually, "as though we are going to have an interesting trip."

"Very interesting," Gaskell remarked dryly, and walked away.

Outside his quarters, the captain found a middle-aged, furtive-looking man with a hang-dog expression on his face, waiting for him.

"Good morning, sir," the man said. "Your port captain told me to report for duty as third officer. Davids—Tom Davids is my name, sir."

Gaskell looked the man over, and said: "I asked for a man and they sent me a punching bag."

"This is my first chance in more than a year, sir," Davids pleaded. "I know these waters better than most men. Sailed them as a master for ten years. Not a cleaner record on the coast——"

"Stow it, Davids," Gaskell said, coldly. "You let pirates take your ship and the board of trade lifted your ticket. Negligence is the only crime, as far as I'm concerned. Got a uniform?"

"Nothing clean, sir——"

"Get one of mine."

"To my dying day I'll appreciate——"

"Report to Mr. Dawson, first mate," Gaskell cut in and walked away.

THREE hours later the *Kin Lung* warped away from the dock and headed toward the sea, carrying its deadly cargo of gold and its strange passengers. In his quarters was the mysterious Wing Yu-Lan, whose face had not been seen by any save his daughter, Miss Yu-Lan, and his Chinese boys, for ten years.

In the cargo hatch the pigs of McArdle slept peacefully, under the effects of the morphine pills given them. But McArdle was not asleep. He moved furtively among the yellow-skinned coolies that squatted in the steerage.

In her cabin, China Doll raged and fumed because Gaskell would not permit her in his quarters. Sybil Barclay, the English girl who had known Gaskell for years, stood on deck with Miss Yu-Lan, whom she had met in London.

McCaleb, the novelist, remained in his quarters enjoying the effects of a bottle of whisky. Romanoff, the jewel buyer, was interested in something on the aft deck.

Night came, shrouding the ship and the passengers in a blanket of black, yet this darkness brought little sleep to many on board.

GERS NOT
D BEYOND
POINT

A knife . . . . missed the throat of the China Doll by a fraction of an' inch.

looked at him with tears in her eyes, and then she tossed something on the table.

McArdle picked it up. It was a key, with a tag marked "Arsenal." The China Doll watched him grab it, and then the tears came in a rush and she buried her face in her hands. McArdle looked at the key and then at her—and grinned.

Night came slowly, with the sea calming down. Far ahead could be seen the Mandarin Light, the signal for Drombo Bay.

Captain Gaskell came out of his cabin, drowsily buttoning his jacket. The first mate, Dawson, was waiting for him.

"You told me to call you, sir," Dawson explained, "when we sighted Mandarin Light——"

"Oh, yes," Gaskell answered. "Turn out the sergeant of the guard and have his men stand under guard until we pass Drombo Bay. Man both guns fore and aft."

Gaskell walked hurriedly away, headed for the wheelhouse, but suddenly he stopped. From amidship came a cry of terror. There was a sound of crashing glass. Gaskell leaped into action, running for the sound. He came to the wireless house, saw a door partly open.

He dashed inside the radio cabin and saw "Sparks," the operator, face down across the table, a thin stream of blood trickling from a gash in his temple.

"Look out, sir," Sparks whispered, weakly. "Malays——"

There was a sound at the door. Gaskell turned, but as he did, the room was filled with Malays. Gaskell's arms were yanked behind him and in a flash he was bound hand and foot. From the deck came the sound of shots.

A Malay staggered out of the door of Second Officer Kingston's quarters, sinking to the floor. Clad in pajamas, Kingston followed after him, gun in hand; but a shot fired above him sent Kingston to the deck, over the wounded Malay.

From another door, Third Officer Davids, the man with the blot on his record and the face of a beaten man, came charging gun in hand, firing calmly and coolly. A Malay fell in front of him. Others rushed for him. Two more went to the deck, but others came from behind and Davids was knocked to the deck.

Yellow arms reached down and yanked him to his feet. A tall Malay gave a curt order in his own language. One of the pirates grabbed Davids' wrist and held it over the wooden deck railing. A belaying pin came down on it with a sickening crushing of the bones. The other wrist was treated likewise and the third mate stood, face twisted with pain, his two hands flapping helplessly over the deckrail.

He looked around in a dazed manner, staggered back, and then fell to his hands and knees and started crawling for a lifeboat. Slowly and painfully, he pulled his pain-racked body into the lifeboat. As he did, another person jumped into the boat. It was the First Mate, Dawson, trembling with fear.

IN the main saloon, four armed Malays kept the passengers quiet. McArdle sprawled lazily on a lounge. The China Doll sat near him.

"You said nobody would be hurt," she reproached him.

"Can't expect the boys to stand there and take it, after somebody cuts loose on them," McArdle sneered.

"I must have been crazy—stark, staring crazy," China Doll moaned.

Sybil Barclay rushed up to Sir Guy and cried: "Where's Alan? They've captured him, and he is captain! Will they hurt him?"

"No, of course not, my dear," Sir Guy replied. "They'll need the captain—healthy."

Gaskell had been taken to the purser's office, where armed Malays guarded him and the purser. Gaskell was staring at the guns in the Malays' hands.

"Every one of those guns came out of our arsenal," he said to the purser. "I again. Gaskell stiffened, drew another deep breath and his eyes closed as consciousness was leaving him for the second time.

OUTSIDE, there was a terrific explosion. It shook every part of the ship. The Malay twisting the wooden shoe, jumped to his feet.

Another explosion. Screams and wild cries in Malay rose above the roar. Ngah dashed out the door, his men following.

Gaskell opened his eyes and said to the purser: "Cut these ropes, quick!"

The ropes were cut. Gaskell tried to jump to his feet, but the pain from the torture was still in his ankles. He stumbled to the door of the purser's room.

The sight that met his eyes caused him to stare in admiration.

Up on the deck rail, holding on with his wounded right hand, blood still dripping from it, was Davids, his old face pale and his eyes flashing. On his shoulder was the pouch of Mills's bombs. One after the other, he was hurling them down on the Chinese junk that had pulled alongside the ship to carry the gold away.

Shots came from the junk. Two of the bullets hit Davids. Then his hand loosened its grip on the rigging. For a moment, his riddled body swayed in the air, and then with a wild shout of death, Davids dove headfirst for the junk, taking his pouch of bombs with him.

There was a terrific explosion that shattered every part of the junk. It drifted away from the *Kin Lung*.

Crawling and stumbling, Gaskell made his way to the bow gun. He turned it on the junk and fired. A shell hit in the midst of the few remaining Malays. The junk lurched forward and slowly started to sink.

Sir Guy was at Gaskell's side.

"Davids!" he cried. "He——"

"He proved to us all that he was a man," Gaskell replied. "He was dead when he hit the deck of the junk. It was the dying gesture of a man the sea called a coward."

"A coward?" Sir Guy shook his head slowly.

LATER that night, the China Doll and McArdle sat in Gaskell's quarters, staring at the captain's hard, cold face.

"I called you here, China Doll," Gaskell said dryly, "to give you a cigarette. You left your case here."

He handed a silver case to her. She paled and caught her breath, and then frantically grabbed a handful of cigarettes.

"How many cigarettes do you smoke at one time?" Gaskell asked.

The China Doll looked at him, all the blood leaving her face.

"You won't find what you are looking for," Gaskell continued. "I found the torn half of a hundred-pound bank note in the case. Smart little trick, to hide it in your cigarette case you left here. Figured that would be the last place I would look for it."

He dug in his pocket and brought out two halves of a hundred-pound note.

"I found the other on a dead Malay pirate," Gaskell explained. "The Chinese characters on them are McArdle's shipping symbols. I saw you going into McArdle's quarters, several times. Did you give the key of the arsenal to him?"

"What if I did?" the China Doll shot back. "You did your double cross another way. I went in to warn you, but you were too high and mighty——"

"You came to warn me?" Gaskell questioned, hoarsely, "and you weren't in with them until then? You fool! You hot-headed, crazy little fool!"

"I didn't think anybody'd be hurt."

"You got me, Gaskell," McArdle said. "That's big enough game for any man. Forget about her. I've fooled you Britishers many times, and I'd be doing it yet if it wasn't for a yellow-headed lass that led me on—and her thinking only of you, Gaskell, only wanting to help you. And you were a fool not to accept. But I'm fooling you again."

His hand slipped from his pocket, and tossed something into his mouth. He grinned at Gaskell for a moment, then swayed in his chair and toppled forward on the floor dead.

FOUR days later, the *Kin Lung* docked at Singapore. A crowd was gathered to cheer the old cargo ship for its successful fight against the pirates.

Captain Gaskell stood on the bridge, his face pale and his eyes showing a pain that didn't come from any physical anguish. He was thinking of the girl that had tried to warn him—and who was now under arrest in her cabin.

The purser came rushing up and said: "The bank's here for the money, sir."

"Well," Gaskell said impatiently, "turn it over to them."

"But there isn't any," the purser answered in a frightened voice. "Those boxes are filled with salt!"

Gaskell smiled, and took a key out of his pocket.

"So they are," he said. "Open the tool box of the steam roller on deck."

"In the tool box of the steam roller?" the purser gasped. "That's one place I would never have thought of looking for the gold!"

"I was counting on that," Gaskell said, and walked down from the bridge.

He went directly to the China Doll's cabin, opened the door and stalked in, angrily.

"Listen to me, numbskull," he said. "My official job ends when I turn you over to the police commissioner—and from then on I'll be on your side of the fence."

"In a pig's eye you will, you big sap!"

"I'll explain it so even you can understand," Gaskell said. "You're going to have the best lawyer——"

"I'm going to plead guilty and take what's coming to me," the China Doll said. "It's sweet of you, Alan, trying to do all this for me. But your future and your happiness with her——"

"There isn't any Miss Barclay," Gaskell cut in. "She's on her way back to England. I don't fit there. I couldn't kick myself out of this God-forsaken country, even if I wanted to."

The China Doll looked at Gaskell with damp eyes.

"I can't do it, Alan," she protested. "I wanted to help you. I stole that part of the bill from McArdle and nearly got killed doing it. I did it to help you—and I was a little fool to get mad——'

"You're a little fool, all right," Gaskell said, "but you're going to use some sense now. Miss Yu-Lan is going to intercede for you. Her father has influence with the British. A form of thanks for me not searching his quarters and seeing his disfigured face."

"But, Alan!" the China Doll cried. "I can't——"

"Shut up," Gaskell said, gruffly. "I'll be back in a moment to take you to the police commissioner."

With that he stalked out of the cabin and went on deck. Second Officer Kingston, wearing a sling on his arm, walked up to him. Gaskell gave him a smile—but suddenly the smile left his face.

"Those shoes are disgraceful on a ship's officer," Gaskell said. "Change them at once, Mr. Kingston."

Kingston looked at him in amazement as he walked away.

"A piracy—typhoon—a disabled ship," he said to Rockwell, who was with him. "His sweetheart on the way to jail—and all he can talk about is shoes."

"That bark of his is all in front," Rockwell said. "He's a pretty sick man at heart."

"Sick!" Kingston roared. "He hasn't got a heart!"

Sir Guy, hearing this remark, walked up to the two officers.

"Perhaps not, gentlemen," he said. "But whatever it is he has, it gets the job done."

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 2

SHE MARRIED HER BOSS

A Columbia Picture, with Claudette Colbert, Melvyn Douglas, Michael Bartlett, and Raymond Walburn.

They predicted this would be the successor to "It Happened One Night," and it seemed so to us. We enjoyed it to the limit. Claudette, a smart secretary who practically runs her boss's business, threatens to leave him. He marries her to keep her around, and then can't shed his office dignity. Furthermore, his sister, his spoiled brat of a daughter by a former marriage, and his servants all resent Claudette's intrusion into their lives. The fun starts, and it's hot and heavy. You'll be talking about the midnight party in the department store for weeks after you've seen it.

THIS ONE PROVES HOW WELL CLAUDETTE DESERVED THE PRIZE SHE WON FOR HER OUTSTANDING WORK.

HARMONY LANE

A Republic Picture, with Douglass Montgomery, Evelyn Venable, Joseph Cawthorne, and William Frawley.

Hollywood is waking up to America. Here is the story of one of the greatest romantic American characters—the immortal Steven Foster. It is the story of the suffering and heartbreak, betrayed love, misguided faith that drove Foster to his grave while he was still a young man. You may like "My Old Kentucky Home," "Old Black Joe," and "Way Down Upon the Swanee River," but you'll never know why they are such plaintive and simple melodies until you know more about the man who wrote them.

A GRAND AMERICAN MUSICAL ROMANCE. SIMPLE, SWEET, AND RIGHT AS RAIN.

ANNAPOLIS FAREWELL

A Paramount picture, with Richard Cromwell, Tom Brown, Sir Guy Standing, and William Collier, Jr.

This was supposed to have been the successor to "The Lives Of A Bengal Lancer," in which Cromwell and Sir Guy both shone. It has many thrilling shots, but it doesn't quite come up to the Gary Cooper epic. Maybe that's because it has more story. Tom Brown is a young Annapolis man whose seeming lack of interest in Navy tradition hurts Standing, a retired Spanish War commander. The story is woven about the older man's efforts to bring the youngster into line.

FILMED AT THE NAVAL ACADEMY, IT IS AUTHENTIC AND EXCITING, ESPECIALLY THE CLOSING SEQUENCES.

Continued on page 109

Larry's gun whipped up. The outer door was opening.

MA—6

GUARD THAT GIRL!

Seventy-two hours between death and a fortune.

CHAMP, the big police dog, flashed from the dining room. A man crouched outside in the darkness cried out sharply.

Larry Donovan whipped from his chair at the dinner table. One hand went to his coat pocket. He put himself between the lovely girl near him and the menace of the dark window.

"Whoever you are, stand still or the dog will kill you!" yelled Larry.

The girl, Helen Bradford, started to her feet. Larry sprang into the night after the dog. A scared, white face showed in the shrubbery. Larry saw the man was Reynolds, a newly hired gardener.

"What are you doing here?" Larry demanded.

"Only taking a walk, and that beast attacks me," the man snarled.

"You sneaked up, or the dog wouldn't have jumped," said Larry.

"Sneaked? With a lighted cigar?" Reynolds puffed the smoke.

Another man, in chauffeur's uniform, appeared. Larry saw it was "Budge" Edwards.

A novelized version of the Columbia Picture of the same title, soon to be released.

CHAMP

"Here, Edwards," he said. "You'd better take care of Champ."

Budge Edwards commanded the dog to be quiet. Reynolds stared at the chauffeur and announced threateningly:

"Keep that dog tied up—or something might happen to him."

Budge only smiled. "Champ can take care of himself."

Larry Donovan sprang back to the veranda. Others from the dinner table crowded the window.

"Well, no harm done," said an angular woman with a vitriolic voice. "Come on, Larry, we'll play some bridge."

LARRY smiled. But he looked at Helen Bradford with worried eyes. The girl was charming as a million. Or the whole three millions she was supposed to represent, but didn't. Larry had the quick wish that she had not been let into this.

He scrutinized the others in the room. There was the angular Aunt Catherine Hudson who wanted to play bridge. Her daughter sat motionless in a chair. The daughter, Sarah Hudson, had stark hatred in her eyes when she looked at Helen Bradford. Sarah was plain, almost ugly. Clearly she envied Helen's beauty.

Larry had twice seen Sarah talking secretly with this new gardener, Reynolds. He decided to watch this girl with the hate in her eyes. For this family home of the Hudsons was a place of waiting. Waiting for an inheritance of three millions—or for murder.

Elwood Hudson, a cousin, was there. He talked loudly. He tried to imitate a young man-about-town. And he was in the house to-night against the wishes of Aunt Catherine.

Aunt Catherine had said frankly, "Any of the Hudsons would kill for that three millions. Even myself."

As Budge Edwards and Reynolds moved away outside, Aunt Catherine's sharp tongue scored Elwood Hudson. He seemed too dumb to notice.

"I don't like this set-up," whispered Larry to Helen Bradford.

"Don't you like being my fiancé?" Helen smiled at him.

Larry's brown eyes clouded. Helen knew that part of it was all right with him. But it was a queer "set-up," as he had said.

For Helen Bradford had been introduced to the several Hudsons as Estelle Hudson, heiress to the late Carl Hudson. Estelle Hudson had been in Europe for years. Her closest relatives had never seen her.

So when Joshua Scranton, attorney for her dead father, had sought the detective agency of Edwards & Donovan, he had a deep-laid scheme. His client in Europe, Estelle Hudson, would be twenty-one years old in three days. It was known she was to inherit nearly all of the Hudson estate at that time.

He told Budge Edwards and Larry Donovan the relatives of the heiress had demanded she be produced before the time arrived. The plan of Joshua Scranton was to introduce a bogus heiress. He declared openly he feared the real Estelle Hudson might be murdered. And he offered ten thousand dollars to have another girl assume her identity.

The Cast

Robert Allen	Larry
Florence Rice	Helen
Ward Bond	Budge
Wyrley Birch	Scranton
Elizabeth Risdon	Aunt Catherine
Nana Bryant	Sarah
Arthur Hohl	Reynolds
Bert Roach	Elwood
Barbara Kent	Jeanne

Produced by Columbia Pictures
Screenplay: Lambert Hillyer
Director: Lambert Hillyer

Helen Bradford, pretty secretary to Edwards & Donovan, insisted she could play the rôle. Both Edwards and Donovan objected. But the affairs of the agency were financially very low. Ten thousand dollars was a lot of money.

Helen Bradford became "Estelle Hudson," just arrived from Europe. Scranton provided a maid, a girl quiet and pretty. She was introduced as Jeanne Martin. Larry Donovan became the fiancé of Estelle Hudson, who had come with her from Europe. Budge Edwards played the part of a new chauffeur who had been engaged for the heiress.

FIRST, they had met the Hudson clan in Joshua Scranton's office.

Aunt Catherine and her daughter, Sarah, and Elwood Hudson had been there. There was Doctor Silas Hudson, an uncle. He was a fanatical, gaunt man. He seemed little interested in either the heiress or the three millions. His sole aim in life appeared to be the finding of a cure for cancer.

William Hudson, or Willie, and his wife, Elaine, also cousins, had completed the group of sharp-eyed relatives. Willie was a fluttery, futile little man. He was dominated by Elaine, his wife. She was big, coldly calm, and blond.

And Aunt Catherine had repeated,

"Any of them would commit murder for the money. Even myself."

Now this was the night of the day all had met in Scranton's office. Scranton, a quiet, vigorous man in his forties, had seemed to enjoy the reactions of the Hudson clan as its members had voiced welcomes to the heiress. The welcomes had been only thinly veneered over their real feelings.

Larry, after the incident of Champ, the agency police dog, and Reynolds, the gardener, recalled that Sarah Hudson had insisted on going to the house ahead of Helen Bradford and her mother. Aunt Catherine and Sarah had lived in the Hudson family home for years. With the three millions, this estate would pass to Estelle Hudson.

Larry played bridge with the others. He was absent-minded. Now he was recalling where he had previously seen the surly face of Reynolds, the gardener. The man had been in a car near Scranton's office that day. As Helen Bradford and the others had emerged, he had driven swiftly away.

Thursday night at ten o'clock, Estelle Hudson would be of age. The relatives would gather for Joshua Scranton to read the will. Larry wished this night were past. He wondered if Scranton knew all about the maid, Jeanne Martin? This was Tuesday night.

BUDGE EDWARDS was a big, lumbering fellow. He felt awkward in his rôle as a chauffeur to Estelle Hudson. Pretty little Jeanne Martin was sitting beside him on a bench. Champ, the police dog, lay quietly at the feet of the girl. He was a choosy dog, but he seemed to like Jeanne.

Jeanne said to Budge, "They're breaking up their bridge game. Miss Hudson will want me."

It was apparent Budge had taken an instant liking to the girl. He held out a clumsy hand and said, "Good night."

Jeanne said, seriously, "Do you think Miss Hudson's really in danger?"

"Probably not," declared Budge, "but we can't tell yet."

"I hope not," smiled Jeanne. "She's so nice." Then she added, "And you'll be careful, won't you?"

"You worry about everybody, don't you?" laughed Budge.

"Well, not everybody," said Jeanne slowly. "Good night."

Budge called Champ to him. He judged it might be well to have a look about the grounds. The actions of the gardener, Reynolds, had been too suspicious to overlook.

WHILE his partner was looking around outside, Larry Donovan paused outside Helen Bradford's door in the upper hallway. As her fiancé, it was all right to show extra attention, he felt. But when it came to a good-night kiss, Helen smiled and closed the door of her room.

Larry lingered a moment. He heard the voices of Helen and Jeanne inside. Larry glanced sharply along the hallway of the old house. He wondered if the excessive frankness of Aunt Catherine was real or assumed. Analyzing the Hudsons, especially the hatred of the girl Sarah, he agreed mentally any one of them might kill for money.

Inside the room, Helen Bradford screamed. At the same instant there was a sharp *thud*. Larry whirled. His lean body jammed the bedroom door as Helen, gasping, opened it from the inside.

"Larry!" she exclaimed. "Come in here!"

Hand on his gun, Larry stepped into the room. Driven into the wood of the door, a pointed arrow still quivered. It was of the big-game-hunting type. Little Jeanne Martin was staring at it with wide brown eyes.

"I only heard a hiss and a *thud*, and there it was," breathed the maid.

Gun in hand, Larry crossed to the windows. They were locked. A quick search showed no possible place where any one could have hidden.

"Look, Larry, at this," said Helen Bradford.

A paper was around the arrow shaft. In printed characters was a message:

GIVE UP YOUR INHERITANCE.
THE THIRD ARROW WILL KILL.
THIS IS NUMBER ONE.

Helen smiled calmly, looking at the arrow.

"A pretty messenger, isn't it?" she said.

"Murderous," declared Larry. "A good bow would drive it through a horse!"

"Well, what's our next move?" said Helen.

"To get you out of here," asserted Larry. "We're through."

"I won't do that, and you know it," said Helen.

"All right," replied Larry, tight-lipped. He suddenly realized how much he loved the agency secretary. "Then bolt this door. Budge and I will see no one gets near the windows. We'll keep this quiet."

"Miss Hudson," said Jeanne. "I want to stay here with you. I'll sleep on the chaise longue."

"You aren't afraid, Jeanne?"

"No, please let me stay here."

Larry heard the door bolted behind him. He went down the stairs. He failed to see a door near Helen's bedroom open a few inches. The smoldering eyes of the plain-faced Sarah were watching him.

OUTSIDE the house, Budge Edwards ordered Champ on guard. The police dog moved away into the shrubbery. Budge went on toward the garage. Larry emerged from a side door into the darkness.

At that instant the snarling growl of Champ sounded ominously close. Larry heard the dog crash into the shrubbery. There was more threshing around. A man's hard feet pounded the sod. Whipping out his gun, Larry dashed for the corner of the house.

A bulky shadow loomed suddenly. Larry left his feet in a headlong dive. His shoulders buckled the other man's knees. Larry's gun flew from his hand. As the two men rolled to the ground, three shots sliced from the bushes. Leaden slugs pounded the wall above the entangled men.

"Larry! You fool! Lemme up!"

Budge Edwards pulled himself free. Larry grinned foolishly.

"My mistake, Budge, but it was lucky. You'd have been shot."

Feet were pounding away. The partners crouched and darted after the mysterious gunman. But the door of an automobile slammed and a car roared away.

Budge halted suddenly. He bent over an object on the ground. The body of Champ was limp. A wire loop on the end of a long-handled rake encircled his neck. Budge lifted the dog.

"Somebody was all set for Champ, and I know who," he said grimly.

"What's going on down there?" demanded the sharp voice of Aunt Catherine.

She appeared in the hallway door. She had an old-fashioned revolver in one hand. Her nightgown was covered by a robe. The white faces of Jeanne and Helen showed behind her.

"Answer me, or I'll shoot!" commanded Aunt Catherine.

"Then aim high—it's Larry!" he shouted.

"Who did that shooting?" Aunt Catherine demanded.

"Budge! Thought he saw some one sneaking through the grounds!"

Budge had put the body of Champ into a car; he was driving rapidly away.

"Where's he going with the car?" said Aunt Catherine.

"Taking the dog to a doctor, he shot the animal by mistake," replied Larry.

Aunt Catherine stared at him skeptically. She turned to Helen.

"When you marry this young man, remember one thing," she said. "He's a rotten liar. Lock all of your windows."

Larry was inspecting the rake handle and the wire loop. Then he heard bicycle wheels crunching in the driveway. Concealing himself, he saw the surly Reynolds riding past. Larry smiled grimly. The rake handle had come from the gardener's shed.

Larry was still watching. Then he stiffened. A figure in a long dark coat had halted Reynolds. Larry recognized the ugly face of Sarah. The girl handed the gardener a folded paper. Wordlessly, she turned back to the house.

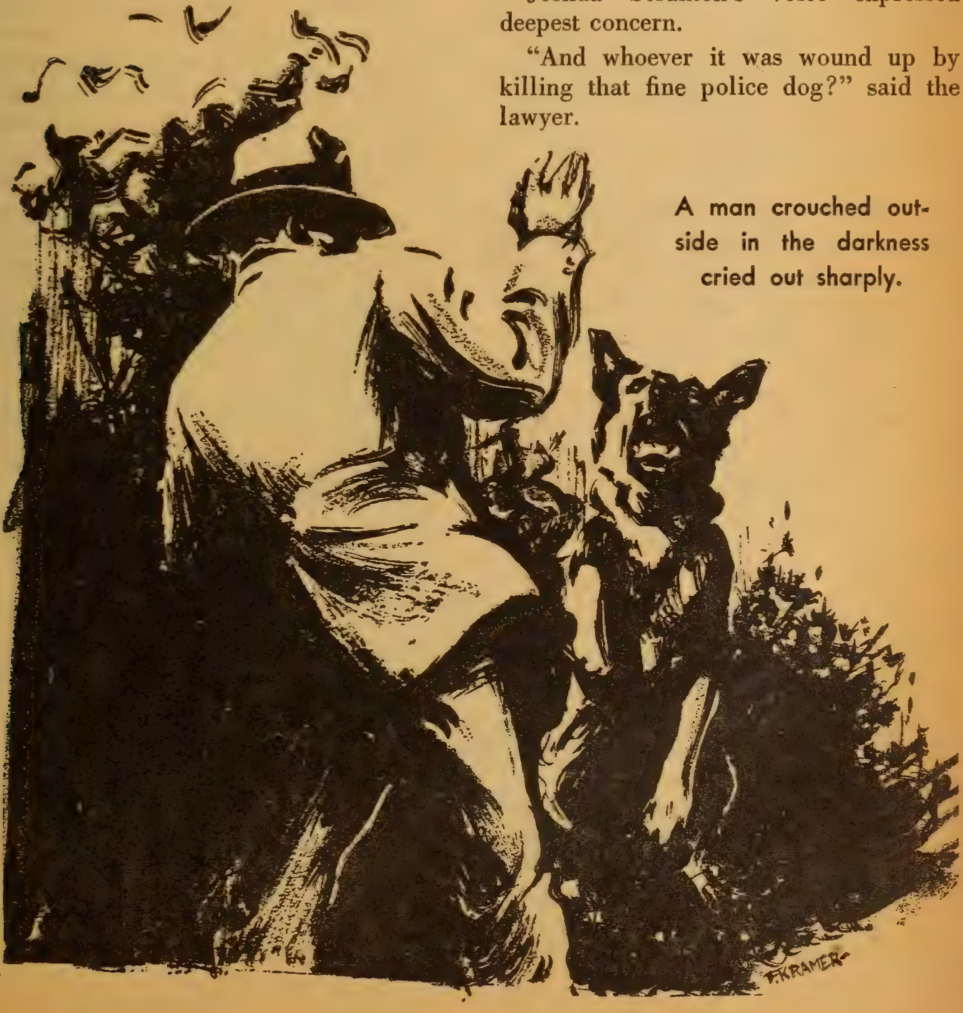
Larry picked up a piece of torn cloth. Champ had ripped some one's trousers before he had been throttled.

LARRY DONOVAN reëntered the house and turned to the telephone. He must inform Joshua Scranton of the night's happenings.

"I think it's plenty for one night," finished Larry, after explanations.

Joshua Scranton's voice expressed deepest concern.

"And whoever it was wound up by killing that fine police dog?" said the lawyer.



A man crouched outside in the darkness cried out sharply.

Larry hesitated a few seconds, then he said, "Yes, Champ was killed."

"I'm very sorry," said Scranton. "I shall insist on paying for his death, besides the other money."

Budge Edwards swore heavily when Larry told him this a few moments later.

"As if any amount could pay for Champ," he growled. "But I've got news. I saw Willie Hudson and his wife, Elaine, at the village. They are not supposed to come here until Thursday night. They were just getting out of a car and Willie's clothes were torn."

"You think——" began Larry.

Budge swore softly, "And I called a newspaper man I know. He tells me Silas Hudson's one hobby is archery."

"Good grief!" muttered Larry. "And Sarah passes a note to Reynolds, the gardener! Then Champ is choked by a wire on a gardener's rake!"

AT the breakfast table the next morning, Elwood Hudson eyed his Aunt Catherine somewhat furtively.

"Well, where were you last night?" said Aunt Catherine acidly.

"Having sweet dreams, my dear aunt," replied Elwood, yawning.

"Good heavens!" said Aunt Catherine. "The place is turned into a shooting gallery and he sleeps!"

"Oh, how is Champ?" said Helen to Larry.

"Sorry, darling," said Larry, a hand on her shoulder. "The vet couldn't save him."

"Speaking of shooting, would any one care to join me at golf this morning?" said Elwood Hudson cheerfully.

"Nobody in their right mind!" snapped Aunt Catherine.

Elwood turned to Larry and Helen.

"I was going to suggest a swim," said Larry.

Helen smiled in agreement. Half an hour later, accompanied by little Jeanne Martin, they dived from the board near the boathouse pier.

Jeanne turned in the blue water and saw Budge Edwards sitting on the pier. She swam toward him. Larry smiled at Helen.

"There's a rowboat tied out there," he suggested. "I believe we can talk more safely out on the lake."

"What really happened last night?" inquired Helen, as they climbed into the boat.

"Enough to prove that Scranton's suspicions are all correct," said Larry gloomily. "I wish you were out of this, Helen."

"Do you really care that much, Larry?" she smiled.

"Plenty more than Estelle Hudson's lousy three millions!"

Jeanne had joined Budge. They were walking along the shore. Larry pulled slowly on the oars. The boat moved along beside the pier. Here it was momentarily concealed from the boathouse.

Larry glanced toward Budge and Jeanne Martin.

"Your maid, darling, and Budge seem to have something in common," he grinned. "Wouldn't that be funny? Old Budge!"

Whang! It was as if a violin string had snapped. An arrow flashed between Larry and Helen. The point was imbedded in the bottom of the boat. It had missed Helen's head by barely six inches.

THE arrow had gone through the redwood plank. Larry swore and his eyes swept the shore. He saw only Budge and Jeanne walking along. He spun the boat back into the protection of the pier. The arrow could have come from only one place—a boathouse window.

Budge and Jeanne came hurrying up. "What happened?" said Budge.

Larry pointed grimly to the arrow. He pulled a paper from the shaft. It read:

LAST WARNING. NUMBER TWO. THREE WILL KILL.

Budge rolled toward the little boathouse. He was halted abruptly. Two figures moved furtively behind some shrubbery. The big detective whipped toward them. The two were Sarah Hudson and Reynolds. Budge seized a paper bundle from Sarah's hands.

Reynolds swore and chopped at him with one fist. Budge's knuckles caught the gardener just under one ear. Sarah screamed as Reynolds fell. Budge pulled a gun from Reynolds's pocket.

But when he was back on the pier, Budge grinned sheepishly. The paper bundle contained only long-stemmed roses.

Seated with Helen on a bench beside the boathouse, Larry suddenly announced, "You're giving this up to-day and getting out."

"Wrong, Larry. I won't do it. I'll stick."

"Sweetheart, nothing can stop arrow No. 3."

Helen was firm. "And we've ten thousand at stake."

"Nickels or millions, I don't care," declared Larry.

"What right have you to dictate to me?" demanded Helen.

"The best right in the world—I love you."

Helen's wide eyes were bright.

"And I care, too," she admitted softly.

"Then call the whole thing off—for us."

"No, I'm going through with it and you'll help me."

"But there's thirty-six hours to go. It's to-night I'm afraid of."

"No use, Larry," said the girl. "But I'll stay in the house. Jeanne will be in my room with me."

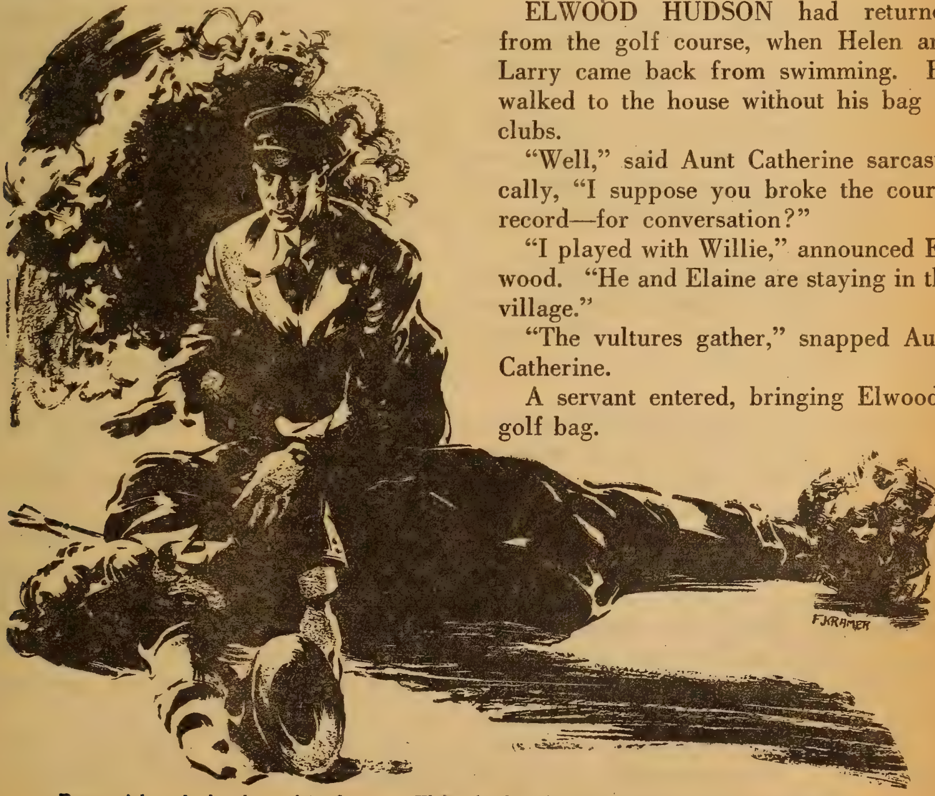
ELWOOD HUDSON had returned from the golf course, when Helen and Larry came back from swimming. He walked to the house without his bag of clubs.

"Well," said Aunt Catherine sarcastically, "I suppose you broke the course record—for conversation?"

"I played with Willie," announced Elwood. "He and Elaine are staying in the village."

"The vultures gather," snapped Aunt Catherine.

A servant entered, bringing Elwood's golf bag.



Reynolds pitched to his face. The shaft of an arrow stuck from his back.

"Your clubs, sir. You left them in the car."

Elwood took the bag. He opened the zipper top quickly. He said, "Ouch!" He withdrew a bleeding finger. Larry Donovan was beside him. Larry caught the bag. As it opened, the feathered shaft of an arrow protruded.

"Funny for shooting golf," barked Larry. "Maybe they're wild?"

"Why—why—how could that've got in there?" stammered Elwood. "Mistake, I guess. There's an archery range at the club."

"And they use big-game arrows with points?" said Larry dryly.

Five minutes later, Larry entered Budge's room over the garage.

"How about comparing this with the other arrows?" Larry said.

Budge gestured grimly at an open steel locker.

"No can do," he announced. "I put the other arrows in there. Also that rake with the wire. And the first note. They're gone!"

Larry swore shortly. Suddenly he snapped the door open. The gardener, Reynolds, was just moving out of the hallway. He had been listening at the door.

Outside, Reynolds's bicycle leaned against a shed. Larry slit the tires with a knife, then walked innocently away, whistling.

SHORTLY after midnight, Larry occupied a chair in the upper hallway. From this he could see the door of Helen's room. Through a window he glimpsed Budge's figure in the moonlight.

If Larry could have seen within the room, he would not have dozed. For his head nodded, and his eyes closed.

Inside the room, Helen Bradford was sleeping. The girl Jeanne, on the chaise longue across the room, was wakeful and wide-eyed. She was staring at a patch of moonlight on the wall. Suddenly her small hand clasped her mouth to choke back a cry.

A panel above her was moving. Through it came a curiously taloned, three-fingered hand. She did not know it, but this was an archer's glove.

For a moment the little maid was frozen. Then she cried out and sprang toward the bed on which Helen slept. For the head of an arrow had appeared. A bowstring twanged wickedly. Jeanne sobbed, throwing herself protectively across Helen's inert body.

Awakened, Helen screamed, "Larry! It's come!"

She snatched an automatic from under her pillow. She fired three shots wildly across Jeanne at the wall. Larry's shoulders crashed a door panel. Then he was inside. His thumb found a light switch.

Both girls were holding to each other. And in the chaise longue where Jeanne had been lying a big-game arrow's point was deeply buried.

"That panel, Larry!" cried Helen. "I shot at something!"

Larry crashed out a window pane. He shouted.

"Budge! Shoot any one coming out of the house!"

Larry groped for some means of opening the panel. Aunt Catherine appeared. She was carrying her big revolver.

"Now what—more shooting—can't we ever sleep?" she snapped.

"There's a secret panel here," said Larry. "How does it work?"

"I don't know—didn't even know it was there."

But Aunt Catherine seemed to have an idea. She turned and ran from the room. Sarah and Elwood were in the hallway. Then Larry suddenly saw the panel swing open. Stairs led downward. He closed the panel behind him and went down.

At the bottom, he opened a door slowly. It gave into the library den. Larry's gun whipped up. The outer door was opening. The lights snapped on. Aunt Catherine stood there with her big revolver.

"SO you didn't know about the panel?" grated Larry.

"No," said Aunt Catherine. "But this was Carl Hudson's den. And he was as crazy as the rest of the family."

Budge came in, breathlessly. He had been running.

"What——" he began.

"Young men," snapped Aunt Catherine, "what detective agency do you represent?"

Budge gulped, and looked amazed. Larry only grinned.

"You didn't have me fooled," said Aunt Catherine. "Scranton hired you. He's smart."

Larry bowed slightly.

"It's on us," he said. "Now maybe we'll get somewhere?"

"Maybe," rapped Aunt Catherine. "Now which one of the crazy Hudsons is trying to kill that girl?"

Budge grunted disgustedly. "Well, I want to question your gardener, this Reynolds."

"Bosh!" snapped Aunt Catherine. "Hired him myself! He's a detective and a darned good one!"

Before Larry or Budge could get their wind after that one, Reynolds himself shoved a gaunt man into the hallway just outside.

"Stand there or I'll blast your backbone!" promised Reynolds.

Then Reynolds pushed on in. He said, "Prowler I caught running from the house."

His prisoner blinked stupidly at the light. Aunt Catherine let out a word that sounded like an oath.

"Silas Hudson!" she added. "What was he doing, Reynolds?"

"Trying to break into this room."

"That's right," admitted Doctor Silas Hudson. "There are three priceless books rotting on these shelves."

"You can take them and get out," said Aunt Catherine, to Larry's amazement.

"Just a minute," said Reynolds, taking the books Doctor Silas Hudson had moved.

The books were in German. They were priceless. "Histories of Three Thousand Cancer Cases, by Von Dressen of Vienna."

Reynolds said to Aunt Catherine, "You're making a mistake. He's mixed up in this."

"Ridiculous!" she replied. "I know Silas Hudson. He'd kill any three people for those three books, but never for money."

Reynolds started to follow the doctor out. The detective came back.

"I took the arrows and the rake from your locker, Edwards," he said. "I've put everything back but the wire off the rake."

Budge and Larry stared at each other foolishly.

"Good grief!" said Aunt Catherine. "Those girls will be having fits! I'll tell them the show's over for to-night, or I hope so!"

When she was gone, Budge said to Larry, "Do you suspect the old girl of shooting those arrows?"

Larry shook his head slowly, and said, "She knows more than we think. I'll ring Scranton and tell him what happened."

A minute later Larry was informed that Joshua Scranton was at the theater. He left a message for Scranton to ring him as soon as he reached his home.

Reynolds stopped Larry in the hallway.

"I guess this Doctor Silas Hudson is out of it," he said. "But I'd be glad to work with you fellows. Maybe we're pointing the same way."

Larry agreed heartily, and shook hands with the erstwhile gardener. Helen, wearing a robe, called him to the door of her room.

"I've got a grave suspicion, Larry,"

she whispered. "I don't like the way this girl Sarah watches me. It gives me the shivers."

Helen then confided that a servant had told her Sarah had been jilted in a love affair. She was insanely jealous of her mother, and Aunt Catherine had been nice to Helen.

They were still talking when the phone rang sharply. It was Joshua Scranton at his home. The lawyer gasped at Larry's account.

Then he said, "I can't think of any one but Aunt Catherine and myself who knew of that secret panel. Please don't take the slightest chance."

THE next morning Budge and Jeanne met in the garden.

"I'll be sorry when this job is over," said Jeanne Martin.

They were seated on a garden bench in the morning sunlight.

"So will I," declared Budge, glancing at the brown-eyed girl. "Ten o'clock to-night, and we're all finished."

"I'll be glad the danger is over," said Jeanne. "But sorry we won't see each other again."

Budge fumbled with his big hands.

"Look, Jeanne. Do you like being a maid?"

"I could think of better occupations."

"So could I——" Budge gulped a little. "Well, uh—a wife, maybe."

"Whose?" smiled Jeanne.

"Why—er—mine."

"My goodness, Mr. Edwards—Budge!"

His big arms went around her, and he mumbled, "To-morrow we can pick out our flat and some furniture."

Reynolds came around the house.

Upstairs, Larry said to Helen in the hallway, "I wish you'd keep Jeanne close to-night."

"Why all this sudden interest in my maid?" said Helen.

"Just a hunch. Do you mind?" replied Larry.

"Not at all, if you feel that way," said Helen, but she smiled.

"We have until ten to-night," said Larry. "Before then, I may know who we have to fear."

DURING the early evening, Helen moved constantly. Everywhere the bleak eyes of the girl Sarah seemed to stare at her. Then Helen caught a glance from Aunt Catherine. At the moment, it seemed the older woman's eyes held as much hate as her daughter's.

Helen tried to think it was her nerves. But when the phone rang sharply, she jumped. Aunt Catherine picked up the receiver.

"Hello . . . Willie? What do you want? . . . What? It isn't serious? . . . Tried to murder you? You're crazy! . . . You and Elaine will still be able to make it at ten? That's too bad!"

Nearly all the others were in the room. She turned to them.

"Willie and Elaine were on their way here. They wrecked their car. Willie thinks some one tried to kill him."

Doctor Silas Hudson arrived. He joined the others in the living room without speaking.

Budge and Larry were talking in a corner.

"Reynolds expects an important telegram from some one before ten o'clock," Larry said. "Scranton doesn't seem to trust Aunt Catherine."

"And that means Reynolds," growled Budge. "She hired him."

"Well, maybe," smiled Larry. "You'd better start for the village."

Budge said, "I won't bring him here until ten o'clock."

Larry's partner did not say who he was bringing from the village.

AT 9:30 o'clock, Reynolds was waiting near the garage. A messenger boy appeared on a bicycle. He asked for "Mr. Reynolds?"

"That's me," said Reynolds, smiling and tipping the boy.

When the boy was gone, the private detective opened the message. He smiled grimly and shifted his gun to his coat pocket.

Near him a bush moved slightly. A sound came, as if a violin string had twanged. Reynolds pitched to his face. The shaft of an arrow stuck from his back. A three-fingered hand reached forth and clutched the telegram.

IT lacked five minutes to ten o'clock. Joshua Scranton smiled benignly. On the desk before him lay his bulging briefcase. Members of the Hudson clan eyed each other furtively.

"Well, well!" snapped Aunt Catherine. "I know this girl is an impostor! You can't read the will without the real Estelle Hudson, Joshua! Where is she?"

Scranton smiled and bowed. "She is here," he said calmly. "Meet the heiress to the Hudson fortune. Take a bow, Miss Jeanne."

Little Jeanne, the maid, was standing by the wall near the panel in the late Carl Hudson's library den. She flushed prettily.

"Well, I never!" gasped Aunt Catherine, as the others stared.

Helen's amazement was as great as the others. Larry Donovan had a sly smile.

The Hudsons were whispering. Elaine had silenced Willie with a harsh word. Willie's face was bandaged. Their car had been run off the road.

Budge Edwards was still missing. Reynolds had not appeared. Larry was standing close to Jeanne Martin, or the now announced Estelle Hudson. Joshua Scranton cleared his throat and moved toward the desk.

There was a crackling snap. The room plunged into darkness. The harsh sound came of metal striking wood. Little Jeanne cried out. Her body thumped to the floor. Then from beside it shot a flashlight ray.

"Don't move!" rapped Larry's voice. "I'm covering all of you with a gun!"

His light beam moved. Budge spoke from the hallway, "What's this, Larry?"

"The fuse, Budge! Snap a coin into it!"

The lights came on. Larry's arm was protectingly over Jeanne. He had knocked her to the floor. Directly over where she had stood, a knife was buried in the panel.

"Lock the windows, and watch the doors!" ordered Larry. "Some one in this room threw that knife! The third arrow failed! I knew Jeanne was Estelle Hudson when that arrow struck her couch!"

Budge's sturdy body blocked the doorway. He glanced at the real Estelle Hudson with a woeful face. Then he appeared to snap out of it. Elwood and Willie Hudson suddenly cringed to the walls. Sarah's eyes blazed hatred at Estelle Hudson. Her hand was under a scarf.

Joshua Scranton stood pale and shaken, fumbling with his briefcase. Then Budge suddenly seemed to come to life. He snapped his fingers.

"Come on, Champ!" he barked. "Get the man who did it!"

Elwood Hudson squirmed with fear in his face. Sarah clapped a hand over her mouth. Aunt Catherine looked frightened for the first time, staring at the doorway. Willie Hudson edged behind his wife's ample form.

Champ, the big police dog, stood for an instant like a statue. Then he sprang.

Doctor Silas Hudson cried out, "No! No! No! That dog! Don't let him get——"

But Champ was a flying streak. His body struck the desk in front of Joshua Scranton. He leaped straight at the lawyer's throat.

Scranton's hand jerked from his briefcase. It held an automatic. The pistol whipped up. But Budge's bunched knuckles struck like the blow of a hammer.

Scranton slumped, the gun slipping from his fingers.

"And there's your murderer!" rapped Budge.

"MURDERER?" gasped out Aunt Catherine. "But he didn't succeed! I was almost sure he was the one, but his arrows missed!"

"One didn't miss poor Reynolds," said Budge. "It got him in the back. And Scranton tried to run Willie Hudson off the road, because Willie had audited his books and found Scranton had lost half a million in stocks. He didn't dare to face an accounting for the estate."

"Right," announced Larry. "And when I checked on his phone, he called back as soon as he had time to reach home after that third arrow was fired. He meant to get Jeanne—er—Miss Hudson here. He was desperate just now, and slipped a paper clip into the desk-light socket before he threw that knife. He almost fooled me then."

Champ stood growling over Scranton's limp body.

"That dog never forgets any one who does him wrong," declared Budge. "And Scranton tried to choke him to death."

"Well, well!" said Aunt Catherine. "Now we'll have to get some one else to read the will!"

Budge glanced at Larry. Then the big detective slipped quietly through the door. His eyes were bleak. He had glanced only once at the pseudo Jeanne Martin.

Larry smiled at Helen, and nodded. Aunt Catherine looked at Larry.

"And Scranton picked your agency, because he thought you boys were dumb," she said. "I thought myself Reynolds was smarter."

"Reynolds knew, too," said Larry. "He had traced the wire used on the dog to Scranton. That's why Scranton killed him."

BUDGE EDWARDS hailed a taxicab when he slipped outside the house.

"To town and step on it," he said to the driver.

The door opposite snapped open. The former Jeanne Martin slipped into the seat.

"Go wherever he said," she smiled to the driver.

"But Jeanne——" stammered Budge. "I mean, Miss Hudson—I'm going to town. You can't——"

"That's fine," said Miss Estelle Hudson, heiress to three millions. "We can just drive around until the furniture stores open in the morning."

"But I can't—you see now that you're——"

Champ nuzzled his nose into the girl's hand.

"You tell him, Champ," she said, "that I won't let him be a chump. Aunt Catherine must keep the big house, and I've got to have a place to live."

Larry Donovan, who had followed his partner outside, stood watching the taxicab turn out of the driveway. He turned to Helen. Her eyes were very bright.

Aunt Catherine spoke behind them.

"Well, now what are you two young folks going to do?"

"Since Budge seems to be leaving the firm," smiled Helen, "I've an idea it might now become Donovan and Donovan."

"Fine!" said Aunt Catherine. "And I'm promising you all of my murder business—unless I happen to be the victim."

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 95

RICH MAN'S DAUGHTER

A Columbia Picture, with George Raft, Joan Bennett, Walter Connolly, Billie Burke, and Lloyd Nolan.

It's a happy thought that maybe, when big gangsters are put away for a few years at a stretch, they improve their minds and equip themselves to become masters of big business. At any rate, it makes a happy picture, whether it's reasonable or not. George Raft, cellmate of the multi-millionaire tax dodger, Walter Connolly, inherits the old man's family when he dies in prison. It is his job, on a death-bed oath, to whip them into shape and make human beings out of them. It's hard work for Raft, but it's fun for you. Some genuine excitement, too, when it comes time for the ex-gangster to cope with his kidnaping friends.

ONE OF THE FASTEST AND STRONGEST COMEDIES SINCE "THE WHOLE TOWN'S TALKING."

SPECIAL AGENT

A Warner Brothers Picture, with Bette Davis, George Brent, Ricardo Cortez, and Jack LaRue.

Apparently "Dutch" Schultz has not lived in vain. Warner Brothers, keen newspaper readers themselves, have taken practically everything that has been written about him, added more that has been passed on by word of mouth, mixed in a few whispers, and emerged with a fast-moving story about a reporter who puts a gangster on the spot. You may have read all about it in the papers, but on the screen it takes on a new vitality, a well-paced humor, and a smash finish that somehow seem to have escaped the notice of city desks the country over.

THIS DAVIS AND BRENT TEAM IS ALWAYS FUN TO WATCH. THEY MOVE FAST AND WORK WELL TOGETHER.

TOP HAT

A Radio Picture, with Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Edward Everett Horton, Eric Blore, and Helen Broderick.

Everybody who thinks he can tap-dance ought to be made to see this one. It should go far to correct a lot of mistaken ideas about amateur dancing ability, and that will be a relief to the rest of us! Astaire and Rogers have never been so vivacious, so entertaining, so touched with light but effective humor. Music by Irving Berlin helps. Horton is still trying to act as if he knows what's going on, and he's always good for a laugh when he finally wakes up. Helen Broderick and Eric Blore climb higher on the ladder to comedy stardom. It's the tops, this Top Hat!

THE BEST THING AMERICA'S FIRST DANCERS HAVE EVER DONE. OR, BRIEFLY, THE BEST!

TUMBLING TUMBLEWEEDS

A novelized version of the Republic Picture of the same title, soon to be released.

A singing cowboy comes back to his gun-shooting home town to find his father riddled with bullets!

BLOOD plastered the wounded man's hair over his forehead. More blood slowly soaked from his shoulder. He was forced to lean against the door frame for support. But the gun in his hand was unwavering.

"You won't leave," he said slowly. "You're not turning me over to the law. Get back against that wall!"

Three men and a shivering colored boy obeyed the command. Their hands were lifted high. The wounded man spoke again.

"Take a rope off that bundle, black boy, and tie their hands."

The colored boy shook. He pulled frantically at a rope around a bundle. The main room in this deserted squatter's shack was only dimly lighted. From outside came a rattle, and the sound of a man's footsteps.

"Work fast!" commanded the wounded man, his body sagging. "If I start to pass out, I may take some o' you with me for luck!"

Outside a man's clear voice broke into song:

"Cares of the past are behind; nowhere
to go, but I'll find
Just where the trail will wind; drifting
along with the tumbling tumble-
weeds."

The wounded man with the gun murmured, "Gene Autry!"

The ancient door of the shack pushed open. A tall, lean rider strode in. His arms were piled with trappings, obscuring his vision. Then he saw the three men with their hands raised.

"Hey—what's going on here?" he demanded.

His glance shifted over his shoulder to the man in the door. The wounded man staggered forward. His gun rammed into the lean man's ribs.

Gene Autry dropped his bundles. He looked straight into fear-ridden eyes.

"Harry Brooks!" he exclaimed in surprise.

The man gasped, "Gene! Don't look at me like that, Gene! I didn't do it!

THE CAST

Directed by Joseph Kane
Story by Alan Ludwig
Supervised by Armand Schaefer
Screenplay by Ford Beebe
Photographed by Ernest Miller
Recorded by Terry Kellum

Gene Autry	Gene
Smiley Burnette	Smiley
Lucile Browne	Jerry
Norma Taylor	Janet
George Hayes	Dr. Parker
Edward Hearn	Craven
Jack Rockwell	McWade
Frankie Marvin	Shorty
George Chesebro	Connors
Eugene Jackson	Eight-ball
Charles King	Blaze
Charles Whitaker	Higgins
George Burton	Sheriff
Tom London	Sykes
Cornelius Keefe	Harry Brooks
Tommy Coates	1st Henchman
Cliff Lyons	2nd Henchman
Bud Pope	3rd Henchman
Tracy Layne	4th Henchman

I swear I didn't! Don't let them get—me——"

The man's strength failed. His gun clattered to the floor. Gene Autry caught him in his arms.

"Give me a hand here," he said. "He's passed out!"

One of the other men said, "You'd better keep his gun handy."

Gene said, "I won't need it. He's an old friend of mine. Eight-ball, get a bucket of water—quick! Harry's in bad shape."

The colored boy went to the door of the old shack. But he sprang back into the dusty, cobwebbed old room.

"Lawdy!" he gibbered. "They's a crowd o' men on hossback comin'!"

GENE AUTRY sprang to the door. He saw a posse riding in through a

GENE AUTRY
The Singing Cowboy

"They's a crowd o' men on hossback comin'!"

broken fence. He identified the leader by his star as a sheriff.

"Help me get him outta sight!" snapped Gene at the others.

The sheriff and his posse halted. They were looking at a flamboyant wagon. This was "Dr. Parker's Medicine Show" outfit. The men in the shack, including Gene Autry, were Doctor Parker and his assistants in purveying an "Electric Elixir." There was "Smiley," a slow-thinking, easy-going cowboy; "Shorty," another rider with quick-witted humor, and the colored boy, "Eight-ball."

Gene had placed Harry Brooks near the wall. Over him he put the bundles he had brought in. As the sheriff and another man dismounted, Gene was busy trying to start a fire.

Before the sheriff's knock sounded, Gene's mind was racing. For five years Gene Autry had been away from his home range. Gunstock, where his father had been a wealthy cattleman, was only a few miles away. Now Gene was returning, as a medicine-show singer. He had become famous as "The Singing Cowboy."

Doctor Parker had shrewdly intended to cash in on this being Gene's old stamping ground. He thought it would sell quantities of Elixir.

Gene hadn't been so sure of that. The ranchers and rangers of Gunstock valley were a hard-riding, hard-shooting lot. Now in this deserted shack he had come upon his best friend, wounded, a fugitive.

Gene was nursing the fire. The sheriff pushed open the door. He was a tall, gray-eyed man. Beside him was another man, with a surly, weak-chinned face. Gene instantly sized this second man as the kind who would hide out and dry-gulch a man, rather than fight.

Doctor Parker stepped pompously forward. He said, "Good morning, gentlemen! I'm Doctor Parker! You may have heard of me?"

"Well, I'm the sheriff," said the tall man. "You may have heard of *me*. You seen anything of a feller with a couple of bullets in him?"

"We've only been here a few minutes," said Doctor Parker. "He might be in one of the other rooms."

"Take a look, Blaze," said the sheriff. "An' look out for him!"

In a minute "Blaze" came back. "He musta slept in there, sheriff. There's fresh blood on the floor."

Blaze stopped suddenly. He was looking at the bundles piled over Harry Brooks. Red, thick liquid oozed along the floor beside them.

"Them traps belong to you fellas?" rapped Blaze.

"Yes," said Doctor Parker. "We just put them there."

Blaze walked over and moved one of the bundles. Gene reached over quietly and took Harry's gun from Smiley's belt. But Blaze had replaced the bundle. His small eyes were vacant. He acted as if he had seen nothing. Gene was sure the man couldn't have missed Harry.

"What's the fellow wanted for, sheriff?" said Gene.

"Murder!" rapped the sheriff. "If you see him, shoot first!"

Outside, Gene heard Blaze say to the sheriff, "Looks as if we oughta spread out. Maybe we can cut the jasper's trail."

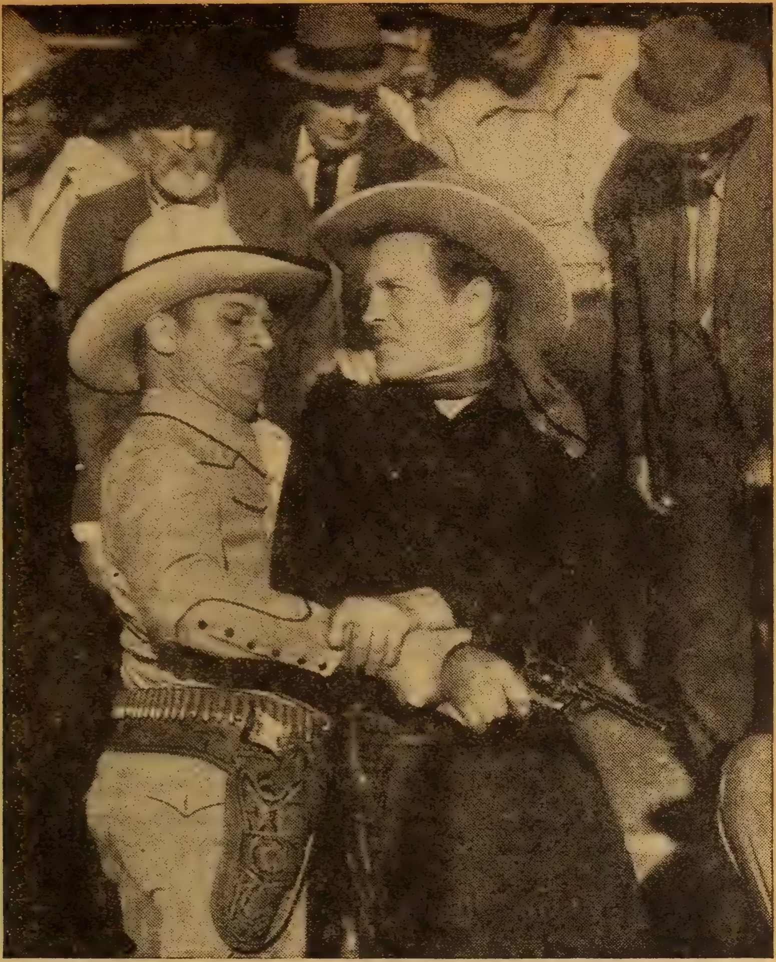
Gene marked the scattering hoofbeats. The posse was splitting up. Gene pulled the bundles partly away and found Harry Brooks still breathing.

"Get that water, Eight-ball," he said. "Harry never murdered any one. He'd never shoot except in self-defense."

Gene washed the blood from his friend's face. Several minutes had passed since the posse's departure. Gene was bandaging Harry's shoulder.

Eight-ball was staring at a partly boarded window. His white eye-balls suddenly rolled.

"Look out, Mistah Gene!" he yelled. "He's goin' to shoot!"



Gene ripped Conners' gun from his hand.

A MAN'S small eyes backed a six-gun in the window opening. The weapon was aimed directly at Harry Brooks. The gun spurted flame.

But Gene had moved with the swift strike of a panther. The water bucket whipped from his hand. As the weapon erupted, the bucket smashed it to one side.

Without waiting to pick up a gun, Gene sprang to the door. The man Blaze was running toward a horse picketed in the brush. Gene crossed to his own horse in three bounds. The third one carried him into the saddle. Blaze's horse pounded away.

Soon the man called Blaze was shooting.

Gene lay low on his horse's neck. Lacking a gun, he was set to ride the other man down. Lead whisked wildly from the ground near by.

The fleeing Blaze was riding hard toward the nearest purple foothills. Gene held to the higher sagebrush. He saw Blaze ride into an open space.

From the hill far above came the spiteful crack of a rifle. Blaze's horse stumbled and went down. Blaze, apparently unhurt, got to his feet. He darted into concealing rocks.

Gene pulled up grimly. He could see the sheriff and some possemen. He judged they had mistaken Blaze for the man they wanted.

The sheriff and two men rode up.

"Was that Brooks?" demanded the sheriff.

"Musta been him!" declared Gene. "He sneaked up an' took a shot at us through the window!"

"Circle the brush, an' we'll try an' corral him!" ordered the sheriff.

As the sheriff's men scattered, Gene saw Blaze again. The man was perched in the branches of a tree. Gene only smiled grimly to himself and rode back toward the squatter's shack.

"WE'RE aimin' for a heap o' trouble, Gene, hidin' this fellow," complained Doctor Parker.

"We're not leaving him here to die!" snapped Gene.

"No, but that deputy'll tell the sheriff we've got him."

"Deputies don't try to murder men they're after," said Gene. "Somebody's framed a killin' on Harry. Now they don't want him caught alive, for fear he'll tell the truth. An' we're goin' to prove it."

"If we stay out of jail that long," drawled Smiley.

The double-team medicine wagon started creaking. Gene, Smiley and Shorty rode slowly alongside. Eight-ball was driving. The pompous Doctor Parker was worried. But he brightened. Perhaps this break might bring more business in the town of Gunstock.

"If we don't get ourselves lynched," muttered the "doctor."

BLAZE came down the dusty single street of Gunstock. He was carrying his own saddle. He halted at the blacksmith shop.

"How come you're wearin' your own saddle?" grinned the smithy.

"Horse stepped in a gopher hole an' broke his leg," said Blaze sullenly. "Barney Craven been in town yet today?"

"Yep!" said the blacksmith. "Seen him over at the saloon."

A rawboned man with hard jaws sat in a tilted chair in front of the saloon. He squinted questioningly as Blaze walked up.

"Like to talk to you a second, boss," said Blaze.

The man was Barney Craven. There were reports his cattle spread had increased through ruthless methods. None dared tell him that.

In a corner inside the saloon, Craven said, "What's up?"

"Brooks was hidin' in the old Gonzales shack."

"Well, why didn'tcha take care o' him?"

"His friends seen me first!" growled Blaze.

"Friends? What friends has he got?" demanded Craven.

"Fellers with a medicine show that's now trailin' right into Gunstock," announced Blaze.

"Was Brooks doin' any talkin'?"

"He don't hafta! One of them fellers is smart! Heard him say he figgered Harry'd been framed, an' he'd git to the bottom o' it!"

"Huh?" grunted Craven. "Round up the boys. We'll call their hand pronto! Hey! What's that?"

Music floated down the trail. The flamboyant medicine-show wagon gaily rounded into Gunstock's single street. A guitar strummed and a harmonica accompanied it. A clear voice rang out:

"Sing a song of the wanderer; the roving, restless Westerner,
Over mountains, hill and dale—The Cowboy Medicine Show!"

The saloon was being emptied. Windows popped open. The flashily dressed Doctor Parker rode proudly at the head of his troupe. The music and the singing were catchy.

Blaze nudged Craven. "Better pray Brooks ain't talked yet."

GENE AUTRY unhooked the banner poles for the Gunstock set-up. Out in front, which was the opened back of the big wagon, the boys were playing "Corn Fed and Rusty." A crowd milled in the street.

Gene joined in the chorus of the song. The Singing Cowboy's voice was clear and vibrant:

"It's corn fed and rusty; it's antique and dusty;
It's the same old tune that they played in eighty-nine.
It's pretty played in C; it's classy played in G;
It's the same old tune, and it still sounds fine."

The side banners concealed the side of the wagon from the crowd in front. Gene continued his singing. But he opened the wagon's side door. Harry Brooks lay there. He was still unconscious.

Gene closed the door hastily. He caught a glimpse of a face. It was Blaze. He was with another man Gene didn't know.

Several other men followed this pair. They had joined the crowd before the wagon. Doctor Parker was beginning to expound the merits of his Electric Elixir. Two neatly dressed girls passed the fringe of the crowd.

Both girls were pretty enough to take the eyes of the crowd. Then Gene Autry's broad mouth broke into a grin. He hurriedly crossed the street.

"Janet!" he called. "Wait a second!"

Both girls looked around. The older one caught the other's arm. They quickened their pace. But Gene had caught up with them.

"Don't blame you for running away," he laughed, "after the way you didn't answer my letters."

His eyes smiled into those of the older girl.

". . . . Now get 'em up, you killers!" It was Gene's voice.

"You look just the same, but why the big frown?" he asked.

"Well, you see I—it didn't seem right —just after——"

Janet's eyes dropped confusedly to her left hand. Gene took a deep breath.

"Oh, I see!" he said slowly. "You got married!"

The younger girl smiled impishly. Her lips puckered.

"Yes, Janet did, but I didn't," she interrupted.

"And who are you, honey?" quizzed Gene quickly.

"Me? Why don't you know? I'm Janet's sister Jerry!"

"Jerry! The freckle-faced brat who couldn't keep her stockings up?" grinned Gene. "I don't know whether to spank you or kiss you!"

"I'm a little too old to spank," flared Jerry.

"Hm-m-m!" grunted Gene. "And it's too public for the other."

Gene's face had reddened. He spoke quickly to Janet.

"You haven't told me who's the lucky fellow?"

Janet hesitated, said defiantly, "I married Harry Brooks!"

"You're married to——" Gene began, then he added, "Do you know if he's in any trouble?"

"What do you know about it?" said Janet breathlessly.

"Nothing," said Gene grimly, "only I found him all shot up, with the sheriff after him! I've got him hidden in the show wagon."

"And you don't know why they're after him?" Janet said.

"No. The sheriff said it was a killin', but not who."

"It—it was——" Janet was stammering. "Oh, don't believe what any one tells you, no matter what it is, Gene!"

The slow-witted Smiley interrupted. "Hey, Gene! Doc's wantin' you to sing! C'mon!"

"Just a second, Smiley; I've gotta talk to——"

"The girls?" grinned Smiley. "They don't seem anxious."

Janet had clutched her sister's arm. They were hurrying away.

DOCTOR PARKER was playing phonograph records. He was telling the crowd he would produce The Singing Cowboy who made them. But the crowd was jeering. Gene went around the wagon. A grave-faced rancher caught his arm.

"Remember me, Gene—your neighbor McWade?" the rancher said. "I'm sure glad to see you again, boy, but not under the circumstances, of course."

"Hello, Mac!" smiled Gene. "You mean me trailin' with this show outfit, huh? Well, I do some singin', that's all."

McWade's sober face showed surprise.

"No, I mean your father. Hadn't you heard?—we buried him yesterday. I thought, of course, you knew."

"No—I didn't know," said Gene with bowed head. "I hadn't heard."

GENE AUTRY stood with bared head on the wagon platform.

"Five years ago, I wrote a song to a man you all knew," he said slowly. "A man who meant more to me than anything else on earth. He didn't know that, because we'd quarreled. I had a record made hoping he'd hear it. But he never did. I'd like to sing it for him now, an' wherever he is, I reckon he'll be listenin'."

Smiley's solemn eyes looked at Gene. He started strumming a tune. Gene's voice faltered, then it became clear. Apparently he had forgotten the crowd. A verse, and then the chorus rang out:

"If I could recall all the heartaches, dear
old daddy, I've caused you to bear;
If I could erase those lines from your
face, and bring back the gold to
your hair.

An action scene from Republic Pictures' "Tumbling Tumbleweeds."

If God would but grant me the power
just to turn back the pages of time,
I'd give all I own, if I could but atone
to that silver-haired daddy of
mine."

The chorus died. The hard-bitten McWade rubbed the back of his hand across his eyes. Then a voice in the crowd suddenly jeered.

"Throw that guy out! He's breaking my heart!"

Close to Barney Craven two of his men—Sykes and Conners, he had called them—joined in the jeering. McWade walked over.

"Lay off that, Conners, or I'll——"

Sykes grinned evilly and snapped his gun from its holster.

"You won't do anything!" rasped Sykes.

McWade struck fast, grabbing Sykes's gun wrist. The gun exploded into the air. McWade wrapped an arm around Sykes and bent his gun arm.

Behind McWade, Conners pulled his gun, turned it butt first and stepped closer. But Gene Autry had stopped singing. His lithe body struck the ground. His second bound carried him beside Conners. Gene's fist lashed out. Conners groaned and went down.

But Gene saw Sykes was too strong for old McWade. The gun was slowly coming into line with the rancher's body. Conners got up, but Gene knocked him spinning into the crowd. Other men had started fighting around them.

Barney Craven and Blaze were edging out of the crowd, back around the show wagon. Gene ripped Conners' gun from his hand. He jammed it into Sykes's ribs.

"Hold it!" commanded Gene. "You don't look good to me!"

"An' you don't look good to us!" snarled the bleeding Conners. "You oughta be rode outta town on a rail—standin' there singin' while the sheriff's huntin' the fella that murdered your dad!"

Gene jerked Conners closer to him.

"What do you mean?" he demanded. "Who murdered my father?"

"Harry Brooks!" snapped Conners. "An' you know it damn well!"

GENE stared at him blankly for a moment. His eyes turned toward the wagon. His friend, Harry Brooks, murdered his father? Stole his girl? Then threw himself on his mercy for safety from the law?

Gene's eyes went bleak with anger. With Conners's six-gun gripped in white knuckles, he dived through the crowd. One hand ripped down a wagon-show banner. He came to the side door of the wagon storage room.

"Murdered my father!" gritted Gene. "Well, the law won't ever get you! Harry Brooks, my best friend! And Janet?"

He pulled open the wagon's side door. The gun was aimed inside. Then he stared blankly. The compartment was empty. Harry Brooks was gone.

Conners, Sykes and McWade were at Gene's back. The crowd pushed close, sensing new excitement.

"He couldn't have got out alone," muttered Gene. "Somebody had to help him."

Conners laughed harshly, "An' who'd do that? He ain't got a friend left but his wife!"

Gene's face hardened. He brushed off McWade's detaining hand.

"Son, you're guessin' wrong," said McWade.

"Wrong, huh?" snapped Gene. "I told her myself where he was!"

Gene was striding toward his horse in the picket line. McWade followed.

"Please, Gene, I wanta talk to you."

"You can do that after I've been to the Brooks ranch," rasped Gene.

BARNEY CRAVEN faced Sykes and Conners. Sykes grinned evilly.

"Well, our gag worked, boss," he said. "What did you do with Brooks?"

"Brooks?" growled Craven. "You know well enough he wasn't there! The door was open! He was gone!"

"Good grief!" said Conners. "Then I was right! Brooks's wife musta taken him out! An' Autry's started for their ranch!"

Outside the town, the loyal Smiley rode close beside Gene. And McWade, slower to mount, was riding in the hope of overtaking the impulsive Gene. Conners and Sykes had seen McWade depart.

"If McWade gets there in time, he'll stop it," said Craven. "He's got some ideas about who really shot old Autry! Let's ride!"

WHEN Gene arrived at the ranch Jerry, Janet's sister, heard the riders come up. She hurried to the door. She saw Gene outside and her cheeks flushed.

Gene opened the ranch-house door without knocking. Smiley stepped in behind him.

"Oh, you startled me!" exclaimed Jerry. "I didn't expect you would call so soon! But I'm glad you did."

"Tell Janet I want to see her," said Gene, coldly.

"I was hoping you would come out, Gene," said Janet's voice from an inner doorway.

Gene did not waste words.

"You've got Harry hidden, and I want to know where," he demanded brusquely.

"Higgins!" called Janet. "You and the rest of you, come here!"

Two tall cow-punchers entered, guns in their hands.

"Ain't you making a lot of noise, young feller?" said Higgins.

"I came to get the man who killed my father!" rapped Gene.

Janet said bitterly, "I did get Harry out of the wagon, but he's not here and he's not a murderer."

"Where is he—don't stall?" said Gene.

"Where he'll be safe until we find your father's killer, Gene."

Janet hesitated, then she smiled gravely.

"The old war between your father and the Brooks family was settled, Gene," she said. "Harry was selling the water rights your father wanted. That's what brought him over the day he was shot."

"Yes," said Jerry. "We were in another room. We heard shots and we ran to the door. Your father was down—and Harry was riding for the brush."

The door burst open and McWade pushed in. He wiped his forehead.

"Thank Heaven, I'm in time!" he said. "Gene, Harry didn't kill your father! It was a rifle bullet! He was bushwhacked from outside!"

"But why?" grated Gene.

"Two outfits wanted the water rights, Gene. Your father was buying. The others wanted to take them by force. A stub in your father's check book showed he'd paid Harry. Some one else got the contract."

"Which way did Harry ride when he left?" questioned Gene. "He might have gone after the killers."

"Up that way, Gene," pointed Jerry; then: "Oh, be careful!"

IN the chaparral above the Brooks ranch house, Gene stared at two objects in his hand. One was the stub of a Red Top cigarette. The other was the brass shell from a high-powered deer rifle. A dozen of the cigarette stubs lay in the bush.

Smiley had been groping around. He had picked up a spur. He was solemnly looking for its mate. This was on his own foot.

"One of the fellers lost a spur," said Smiley. "That's something to go on."

McWade said, "Them stubs an' the shell tell the story."

The cowpuncher Higgins strode up the hill.

"Craven and his bunch just rode in," he said.

Jerry followed Higgins. "Oh, Gene," she said. "Craven is the other man who was after Harry's water rights."

"Now I get it," said Gene slowly. "That's why one of his men tried to kill Harry this morning."

"Please, Gene," pleaded Jerry, "don't start anything."

"Never mind," smiled Gene. "I've got a smarter plan."

BARNEY CRAVEN'S men gaped at him. Craven had been called aside by Gene Autry. They had talked for ten minutes.

"We're riding back to town," announced Craven. Then he winked at Blaze and Conners. "But," he added in a low tone, "we'll come back to-night to get Harry Brooks."

McWade looked at Gene as the Craven crowd rode away.

"I told him," said Gene, "that Harry didn't kill my father. But a man smoking Red Top cigarettes did it. Craven had a package of Red Tops in his pocket. Then I told him Harry Brooks wasn't here, but he would be out to-night to tell me his story. And Craven said he'd leave everything to me."

"But Gene," said McWade, "Craven's too smart for that."

"Sure," agreed Gene. "And we might as well prepare for visitors. I told Craven Harry was being brought out from town."

Gene and the others heard a sudden rumbling on the trail.

"And that's what I call luck!" exclaimed Gene. "It couldn't have happened better if we'd ordered it!"

Doctor Parker's medicine show wagon

was rolling toward the Brooks ranch. Craven and his men had halted. They stared at the wagon as it passed. Then they rode slowly away.

"And now," said Gene, "Craven will think Harry's been put back in the wagon."

Craven and his men pulled up their horses at the top of the hill. They were looking back, down at the ranch houses.

Gene greeted Doctor Parker and Eight-ball, who was driving.

"Pull the wagon up alongside the bunk house," Gene directed.

Up on the hill, Craven smiled knowingly.

"Look!" he said to the others. "They went straight to the bunk house!"

"Let's go see if they've got Brooks!" suggested Blaze.

Craven smiled craftily. "We'll do better than that," he said. "But we'll do it after dark. And if they have got him with them——"

FROM the Brooks bunk house came the musical sounds of a song to a strumming guitar. Three men crouched in the darkness, listened. They were Conners, Sykes and Blaze.

"They're all asleep at the house, an' the two guys we want are in the bunk house," said Conners.

"Do you think Brooks really is there?" said Blaze.

"Yeah," grunted Conners. "Asleep. And Autry, the fool, is standin' guard with a guitar!"

Gene's clear voice was melody on the night. His guitar strummed. A heavily bandaged form lay in an upper bunk. Under the lantern hooked to the ceiling was the figure of Gene in the shadow. Through one window, the prowlers could see the back of his head and his hat. The old-fashioned rocking chair in which he sat kept rhythmic time to the music.

The bunk house had but one door. This opened into a darkened room. The lighted space in which Gene sat beside the bandaged figure in the bunk was another room.

Conners, Sykes and Blaze crept to the door. Sykes opened it softly. The back of the rocking chair was toward the door. All three entered with drawn guns. From the darkened room, Conners fired suddenly at the moving rocking chair.

To the amazement of the three, the chair continued to rock. The voice of Gene rang out clearly. The song went on, uninterrupted.

Blaze swore heavily. His own gun jumped in his hand. He poured five shots into the bandaged figure on the bunk. Sykes was shooting at the man in the chair. The rocking chair jerked around. Out of it fell a suit of clothes and Gene Autry's hat. The clothes were stuffed with straw. The bandaged figure in the bunk was another dummy.

"Surprise! Now get 'em up, you killers!"

It was Gene's voice. He was standing in the dark room with them. A phonograph was still playing beside him. He had jerked a rope connected to the rocking chair.

The three men swore wildly. But guns were being shoved into their backs. With hands in the air they were pushed into the lighted room. The cold, grim eyes of McWade, Smiley, Shorty and Gene were upon them.

"Takin' 'em to the sheriff to-night?" said McWade.

"Not till I've phoned the Blue Diamond Saloon to find Craven," said Gene grimly.

Feet pattered outside. It was the pale face of Jerry at the door. "Oh, Gene!" she gasped. "We heard shots! Are you hurt?"

"Not by one hundred per cent," grinned Gene.

He patted Jerry's small hand. Janet's marriage didn't seem to matter so much now. And on the way to the ranch house Jerry put her hand in his.

Jerry was hugging Gene's arm as he

spoke into the telephone at the ranch house.

"We've caught three of the gang that killed my father, Mr. Craven," said Gene. "I thought you'd be glad to know about it."

In the Blue Diamond Saloon, Craven turned pale, but he managed a smile and stammered into the phone, "Th-that sure is good news! When are you bringing them to jail?"

"I'm figurin' on sendin' them in tomorrow, in the medicine wagon, Mr. Craven," said Gene with innocent frankness. "If I send them that way without a guard, I guess their friends won't suspect anything until they're safe in jail."

"That's a smart idea!" approved Craven. "Thanks for callin'!"

Smiley came in. He said, "They're the men, all right. They all smoke Red Tops."

"And so does Craven," remarked Gene dryly.

EIGHT-BALL drove the flamboyant medicine show wagon up the winding mountain road. The colored boy's rolling eyes were evidence he was very much scared. Apparently Eight-ball was alone. No riders accompanied the rumbling wagon. Eight-ball wasn't liking his job.

He liked it less when five men appeared from a point of rocks. They spurred their horses toward the wagon. Eight-ball cracked the whip lash over his four horses. They went over a rise and started on a downgrade, plunging.

Shots suddenly crackled from guns of the riders. Eight-ball rolled from the seat into the compartment behind it. From this position he still held the reins.

Two riders caught the lead horses, yanking them to their haunches. Craven sprang to the ground. He pulled at the wagon's side door. He dragged out the shivering Eight-ball.

"Where are your prisoners?" snapped Craven.

"Dey—dey's locked in de back, suh!" stuttered Eight-ball.

"Go back and open up!" ordered Craven; then added to one of his henchmen, "An' see this colored boy don't do any talkin' later!"

The henchman prodded Eight-ball with his gun. Craven climbed to the seat of the wagon, catching up the reins.

The trembling Eight-ball unlocked the wagon's rear door. Two men pulled it down. Another man stepped back and took careful aim at the colored boy's back. His thumb lifted the hammer of the gun. The colored boy's face was chalky.

"Mistah! Don'—please, don't do dat!"

Three men now crowded around the opening end gate. The man with his gun on Eight-ball, grinned and——

Inside the wagon a gun rippled fire. The weapon smoked in Gene Autry's hand. The shot broke the wrist of Eight-ball's would-be killer. Smiley, McWade, Shorty and Higgins poured through the end gate, guns leveled at the other men.

CRAVEN heard the shots and the voices. He suddenly lashed the horses. But a man was coming over the top of the wagon as it started rocking down the mountain grade.

Gene sprang, carrying Craven with him back into a compartment. With leathers flying, the double team started running wildly. The big wagon rumbled on the heels of the wheel horses. Craven had dragged a gun and it exploded at close range. The bullet seared Gene's forehead.

Gene staggered back. Craven jumped toward the seat. Gene caught him. His knuckled fist collided with Craven's chin.

Smiley yelled from the rear of the wagon. He was inside the end gate. One of Craven's henchmen was bouncing along. Smiley was grimly holding the man by his heels.

Up ahead, Gene leaped to the wagon tongue. He missed his footing and disappeared between the plunging, maddened horses. But one steel-like hand fastened on the traces. Gene lost a part of his trousers, but he pulled himself back onto the tongue.

He was a queer, ragged figure as he topped the wheel horses. His feet spread and he gathered the leathers into his hands. The wagon teetered on the edge of a precipice. Gene's leaning body seemed to balance the rolling outfit. It came back into the winding road.

In a few seconds, Gene was back in the driver's seat. Craven lay huddled behind him.

WILLING hands seized the horses' bits in front of the sheriff's office in Gunstock. Gene propelled a heavy figure before him. The sheriff looked at him with cold, gray eyes. The lawman showed no surprise whatever. A slow smile came over his broad mouth.

In the sheriff's office, it was Jerry who appeared first. She didn't seem to mind it being public. Her arms went around Gene's neck, then she kissed him.

"It's still pretty public," murmured Gene.

"I don't care if the whole world's looking," bubbled Jerry.

Gene turned to Craven.

"There's the man you've been trying to get, Craven," he said quietly. "He's been in the only place he'd been safe from your gang."

A cell door was partly open. Harry Brooks was sitting on the edge of a cot. Janet was beside him.

Gene said, "Sheriff, did Harry have my father's check for the water rights?"

The sheriff smiled and extended a blue slip of paper.

"Good!" said Gene. "And here's the rest of the evidence! I got it from Craven's pocket while he was out!"

"I'd guessed he would have it," smiled the sheriff.

"It's the contract Harry gave my father, but the name's been changed to Craven," said Gene. "He killed my father and blamed it onto Brooks. With both out of the way, he would have had the water rights."

Smiley, McWade and the others were escorting seven men into the jail. Among them were Blaze, Sykes and Conners.

"Perhaps Craven didn't do the actual shooting, but they're all in it up to their necks," declared Gene.

THE big medicine show wagon rumbled from Gunstock. On the seat was the grinning Eight-ball. The pompous Doctor Parker rode proudly ahead. The sales of Electric Elixir had been enormous. Smiley and Shorty rode alongside.

A big sign topped the wagon. It read, "Just Married." Ribbons streamed from it. On the end gate two persons sat very close together. Gene strummed his guitar and he was singing. Jerry snuggled closer.

Gene's clear voice rang out:

"I know when the night is gone
That a new world's been born at dawn;
I'll keep rolling along,
Deep in my heart is a song,
Here on the range I belong——
Drifting along with the tumbling tumbleweeds."

The JUNIOR ADVENTURER'S CORNER

COLUMBIA'S
JUNIOR
ADVENTURERS
CLUB

Old Adventurer Says, "Meet Jack Dempsey"

HI there, Adventurer!

This is "Old Adventurer" talking. Not one of you young buckaroos that call yourselves Junior Adventurers. I'm *Old* Adventurer, but I'm mighty glad to know you, just the same!

I came blowing into town the other day to check up on things and find out how things are going with the Junior Adventurers Club, and the first thing they said was, "Go see Jack Dempsey. He's an Honorary Adventurer, now, and he ought to have something to say that Adventurers would like to hear."

Now, seeing Jack Dempsey isn't exactly an easy thing to do. You never in your life saw a fellow any busier than the ex-champ, what with his big restaurant and his chocolate candy bars and this and that. But I told the young lady that took my hat away from me that I wanted to see Mr. Dempsey, and I told her why, and—well, it was almost no time at all but what I was sitting down at a table, right across from the old "Manassa Mauler," himself.

He grinned like a kid. "So you want me to tell you a story about myself?" he said.

I said, "Gosh, it isn't me, exactly. It's all those Junior Adventurers. They're the ones that want the story. I'm just going to tell it to them for you."

"Something true?"

"Something true."

Jack Dempsey scratched his head for a minute. "It's hard to think of a true story about myself, after all these years. Those sports writers have finally got me believing that the stuff they write about me is true."

Then he grinned again. "But here's one," he said, "and it's true as the gospel. It's how I got started fighting.

"I don't mean that I'd never fought before the time this story starts. I don't suppose there was any kid in all of Utah that fought any more than I did. I was always getting into some sort of a scrap—with Cliff Holden or Harvey Kelton or Fred Woods.

"But this is how I got started in the prize-fighting business. My home was in Lake View, Utah. That's about five miles from Provo. It was just a little farm town, and that's about all.

"My father was pretty much like any kid's father, I suppose. And he was always pretty strict with me—so I thought. Always wanted me to do the chores around the house when I wanted to go out and play with the other fellows.

"One thing I always felt was wrong was my allowance. I used to get a nickel a week, or maybe it was a quarter; I don't remember, exactly. But, whatever it was, it wasn't as much as I wanted."

He smiled a little bit. "Now that I look back, I know that dad always gave me more than he could afford—we were pretty poor. But that never made any difference to me, at the time. All I knew was that I wanted more money to spend than he would give me.

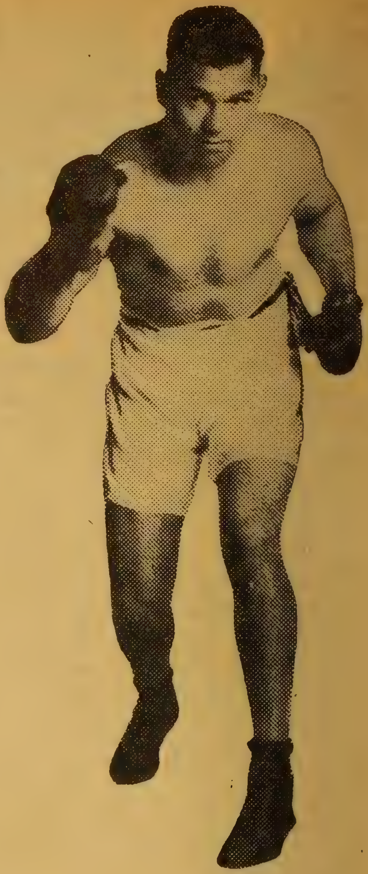
"So what do you think I did?" he asked, laughing sheepishlike, and poking at me with a hand that was still good enough to tear my head off. "I ran away from home!

"YES, SIR, I ran away from home! Oh, of course it was the wrong thing to do, but I was just like any kid. I figured that if things didn't suit me at home, they'd be sure to be lots better away from home. But I learned!

"I'd thought things were pretty tough at home, but I never found out what 'tough' really was until I lit out for myself. I didn't know just where I ought to head for, but I'd always heard that Denver was a big place—a town where a kid ought to be able to hustle around a bit and make a lot of money. So I looked around and the first thing I knew, I saw a freight train being loaded. I figured it might just as well be going to Denver as any other place, so I hung around until nobody was looking, and I hopped on."

It looked like he needed a little prompting. People were drifting in pretty fast by now, and Jack was spending almost as much time saying hello to them as he was telling me this story for you.

"Where'd the freight take you?" I asked him.



Dempsey thought a minute. "Paonia," he said, finally. "Paonia, Colorado. That's a nice town. I dropped off there, because I was so hungry I could have eaten the engineer. I was broke, of course. Didn't have a cent, but I tried to find some eating place that could use an ambitious youngster right away. I didn't have much luck, but I did find some lady in a house about a mile out of town who wanted some rugs beaten.

"After a while, I learned that it was never any use looking for a job in an eating place. The thing to do was to find some woman who had work to be done around the house. I kept from being hungry for about a week that way.

"Where'd I sleep at nights? Outside. There was a pretty good peach orchard on the edge of town, and I used to sneak into it when it got dark, lie down under one of the trees, and go to sleep. I always made it a habit to get up and out of the orchard before the sun was high, so I wouldn't be caught.

"But one morning I overslept, I guess. The man who owned the orchard caught me. I suppose he thought I was a regular tramp—at least, he said he did—until he saw how young I was. Then, instead of throwing me off his property, he stopped me and talked with me for a while, and finally he said that if I wasn't afraid of work he thought he could use a lively youngster—like me, of course!—to pick peaches for him.

"So now I had a job. I've forgotten how much I was paid for the work, but it was a lot more than dad could ever afford to give me, so that was all I wanted.

"Then one day, I was up on top of one of the trees. I don't know what was the matter. Maybe the sky was a little bluer that day, or the sun was shining brighter, or there was a nice breeze. Whatever it was, it started me singing. Now there's one thing about my voice. It may not be so good, but it is certainly loud!

"So I stood up there, in the top of that tree, and sang my lungs out. And all of a sudden, I felt the tree wabbling, and I looked down and there was my boss. And that's the last peach picking I ever did! He fired me.

"I WAS knocking about town that evening, walking around the streets wondering what I'd do next, when I saw a fight starting. By the time I'd got close enough to watch it, there was a big crowd around, all cheering for this one or that.

"You know how crowds are. They can get as excited as the men who are fighting, sometimes, and this was one of those times. Before long, I felt somebody pushing me to one side. I wouldn't have minded moving over, except that I wouldn't have been able to see as well. So I pushed back. And I got pushed again. And I pushed back again.

"That didn't last very long. The man who was pushing me was even bigger than I was—and I was a pretty husky kid—and he didn't like my being in his way. He said so. Well, I wasn't going to be pushed around by anybody, and I said as much, and the next thing you knew, there were *two* scraps going on.

"After the fight, I was walking away, and a man took me by the arm. 'You licked that fellow pretty quick,' he said. 'You must be a bear-cat when you get going?' I admitted that I was."

"Modest, like," I put in.

"Yes," Dempsey grinned. "Then this man told me about a fellow in Montrose, Colorado, who was trying to drum up the idea of a local boxing club, with regular fight nights. He wasn't having much luck, though, because there wasn't anybody in Montrose good enough to fight him. And who do you think the fellow in Montrose was?"

"I don't know," I said. "Who?"

"Fred Woods," the champ beamed. "Remember? Fred was one of the kids I used to fight with all the time back in Lake View."

I remembered, then. Cliff Holden, Harvey Kelton, and Fred Woods!

"So I went to Montrose. Hiked and got rides with farmers. It was only thirty miles or so, and I made it in one day. Fred was tickled to see me, because he'd run off from home, too, and he was having a pretty tough time of it. I bought Fred the first square meal he'd had in a couple of weeks, that night.

"After we ate, we made plans for a thirty-round bout. We'd be the promoters, the main attraction and the preliminaries, all in one. We'd hold the fight in an old barn that Fred had lined up. We would sell tickets at two dollars a head—what did we care how high we made them? Even ten cents sounded like a lot of money to us, then.

"The only rub was that we didn't have anything toward the fifteen dollars the farmer wanted for the use of his barn. We didn't have money to print up tickets or posters, either. Boxing gloves would cost more money, and so would our trunks and shoes. The more we thought about it, the more it looked like we were going to have a tough time of it.

"But we didn't worry much. We'd had a good meal, and we were in a nice comfortable field. We just lay down and went to sleep.

"IN the morning, we started working the town. We went to every merchant in Montrose—the blacksmith, the hardware store, the barber, the grocer. We told them that the fight was all set for a week from the next Saturday night. We were going to print programs, and we were selling the extra space on them for advertisements.

"Everybody fell for our story," Jack went on. "There wasn't one merchant we saw who didn't want to buy an ad from us. I don't know why, except that it was probably going to be the first prize fight Montrose had ever seen, and they all wanted to have some sort of a part in it.

"We collected almost thirty dollars from them. We took fifteen of it and rented the old barn for the fight. The rest went into printing posters that we tacked up all over town that night. Fred wrote the copy for them, and he must have made it sound as though a couple of wildcats were going to be let loose at each other, because the next day we were swamped at the 'box office.'

"Fred had to stay there and hold the crowd while I hot-footed it over to the printer to argue him into making up some tickets for us in a hurry.

"He didn't want to do it, especially when I had to admit that I couldn't pay in advance. But he finally agreed to run off fifty tickets. I grabbed them as they came off the press and, even though the ink wasn't dry on them yet, Fred and I had them sold in less than ten minutes!

"Well, you can imagine how we felt. There we were, two kids who had run away from home, and now we had a hundred dollars in our pockets! It was a pretty strong temptation to forget about the fight—just to get out of town as fast as we could, and keep the money.

"But we stayed. We paid the printer. We had the programs printed up finally, and we ordered and sold more and more tickets.

"Then the big night came. It looked to us like there were a million people out to see us. A lot of the Montrose men had waited till the last minute, and bought their tickets at the gate. Fred was afraid that if we didn't give them their money's worth, they'd get sore and make trouble for us. So we agreed to go easy for fifteen rounds—just look like we were fighting hard—and then tear into each other.

"So we climbed into the 'ring.' We were fighting on the bare floor—no canvas to break the fall, if one of us went down. The poles that held up the ropes in the corners were just rough pine, without being protected in any way. The ropes weren't padded or covered. There were a dozen ways of skinning yourself on the ring, itself, if you weren't careful.

"Well, we started in. I don't suppose there were ever any two fighters more careful of each other than Fred and I were. We did everything but turn our backs on the other fellow, in order to keep from hitting him. We made awful faces, we swung haymakers that missed by a couple of feet, we danced around a lot. But for two rounds, I don't remember that either Fred or I landed one solid punch. Not even a light one.

"Then, in the middle of the third round, we began to hear from the customers. They started yelling at us, especially when we were waltzing around in clinches. Finally Fred whispered in my ear that we ought to give the crowd a little fighting for a change, and the next thing I knew, the roof fell in!

"At least, that's the way it felt. Fred had backed off, and hit me as hard as he could. Caught me right on the jaw, and I didn't even know what was happening for the rest of the round.

"I CAME to, a little bit, in my corner, and I asked the fellow who was throwing water all over me if I'd been knocked out. He said I hadn't, but that it wouldn't be long before I would be, if I kept up the way I was going. Well, that got me mad!

"As I came out for the fourth round, I heard the crowd yelling their heads off, yelling for Fred to come in and finish me

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off. Fred didn't want to, though. He was holding back a little, waiting to see what was going to happen. He waited for me to come to him, and still didn't look like he was going into action, so I said, 'Come on and fight!'

"He came in again, and this time I was ready for him. From then on, it was just like the scraps we used to have back in Lake View. We slugged, hit hard in the clinches, and generally did whatever we could to cripple the other fellow for life!

"The end came in the seventh. Poor Fred had taken an awful beating—I guess it was the first time I had ever licked him, but it made up for all the trimmings I had taken from him! His face was all bloody, his body was raw. He looked like a train had hit him. But he was game! He came out for it like a soldier every time I stepped back to give him a chance to get his breath.

"And did the crowd like it! They were having the time of their lives! I knew that, no matter what happened now, they'd be satisfied that they'd gotten their money's worth, so I decided to end it in a hurry, and as decently as I could.

"With about a minute more to go in the seventh round, I brought Fred's guard down with a feint to his stomach. Then I clipped him right on the button. He probably never felt it at all. He just collapsed, and I helped carry him out of the ring after he was counted out.

"That's almost all there is to the story, I guess. Except that Fred and I made almost four hundred dollars apiece on the fight."

"Four hundred!" I yelled. It kind of knocked me out of my seat for a minute. I was thinking of two kids who had run away from home because they wanted more money, and then had made themselves four hundred dollars each!

Dempsey nodded solemnly. "Four hundred."

"Well, what'd you do then?"

He grinned. "I caught the first train back home and gave the money to dad. I was through with being a bad boy."

THERE'S a couple more things to say before we turn out the lights. As long as MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE is going to be the official fiction magazine for the Junior Adventurers Club, we might just as well keep on meeting in this same place every month.

Next month, I'll see what other famous Honorary Adventurer I can find for another true adventure story. Who'll it be? Casey Jones, the famous aviator? Clyde Pangborn, who's planning to fly all the way around the world without stopping before long? Vincent Richards, the tennis champ?

Have you any questions to ask these men? You know the third law of the Junior Adventurers: *Helpful to the Stranger*. That goes for Honorary Adventurers, as well as the rest of us. And, even though you aren't exactly a stranger, they're just as willing to lend a helping hand. There are lots more Honorary Adventurers, too, all of them experts in their own lines. So, ask up, Adventurer! There'll be somebody to answer you.

I JUST thought that maybe you haven't joined up with the Adventurers yet. Funny, going all this time and not thinking about it.

Well, if you haven't, you'd better sign up quick. It doesn't cost a penny. Just fill out this blank, send it in to us, and we'll turn it over to club headquarters, where they'll make out your membership card for you and send it along, together with your handsome-looking pin and more information about the club. They'll tell you how to start a local club of your own and make you an officer, if you do it the way they say. There are lots more things, too, but we'll save them for later.

HAVE ANY of you Junior Adventurers started football teams? Or are you going to have basketball or hockey teams made up out of your clubs this winter? We'd be right glad to hear about them. Send in a picture, too, if you can, so we can show the world what a bunch of go-getting Adventurers look like.

This is all for now, then. We'll be meeting each other here at the same place next month. How about it, Adventurer?

So long!

Old Adventurer

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What is my scheme? I have no "scheme". I don't want to sell you any lessons or machinery or anything like that. The method I use to bring out your hidden talents is the method recommended by Henry Ford who says that you can "learn best by DOING." I give you a chance to make money at once in a pleasant business of your own. You simply follow my instructions. I show you how to plan your time; how to establish a regular route of steady customers who order from you every week; how to spend 6 hours a day for 4 days gathering up the orders. On Fridays you deliver, and collect the money. Every Friday night you have your profits for the week in your pocket. Then you lay off until Monday. That's my plan—a good living for you in a five-day-week, and the rest of the time for play or recreation. If you are willing and able to give 5 days a week to my plan, I'll show you how you can make every week-end a happy vacation with money to spend for things you need and want.

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Scores of people that I have helped start in their own business have sent me reports of exceptional earnings. While they have no reason for telling anything but the truth I never accept these statements until they have been sworn to as being the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. These sworn statements are taken by a legally appointed Notary Public who affixes a seal to the statement to attest the authenticity of the signature. That's why I know that the earnings shown above, although exceptionally large, truthfully represent the money making opportunities in this business. Send your name at once. All facts are free and without obligation.

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But don't bother if you're a quitter! It takes fight and hard work to get ahead these days—and weak-kneed, spineless men have no more chance of helping themselves by spare-time study than they have of getting a raise tomorrow!

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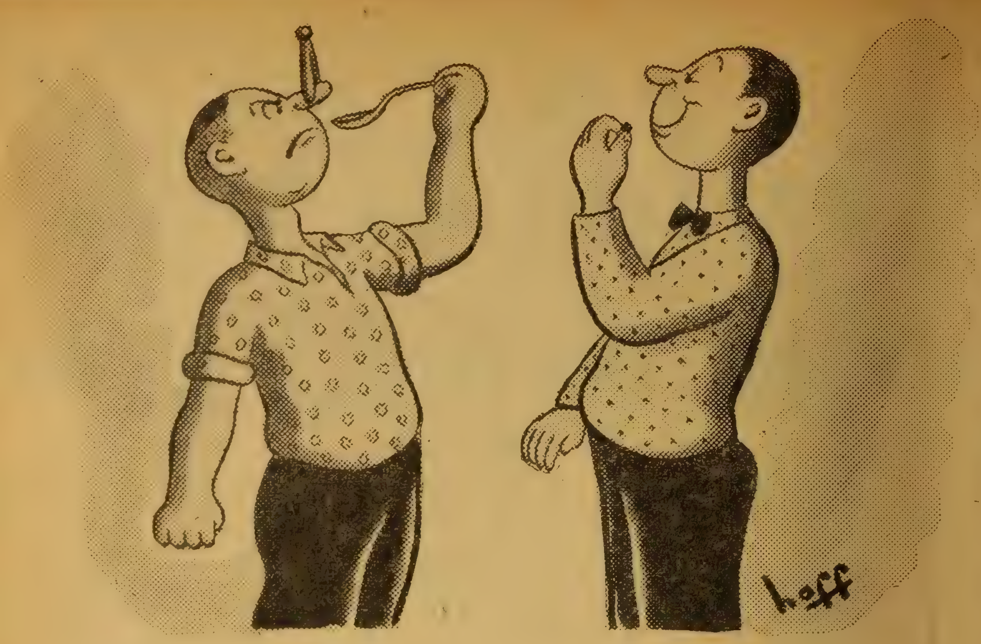

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A joke's a joke, but a nasty-tasting laxative is no laughing matter. And it's so unnecessary to punish your palate since Ex-Lax tastes just like delicious chocolate. It's a *joy* to take! But taste is only one of its many advantages. Ex-Lax is milder. It's gentler. Yet it is thoroughly effective. It's so good that more people use it than any other laxative—46 million boxes were sold last year in America alone. A box costs only 10c—at any drug store.

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AT ALL
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A STREET & SMITH PUBLICATION

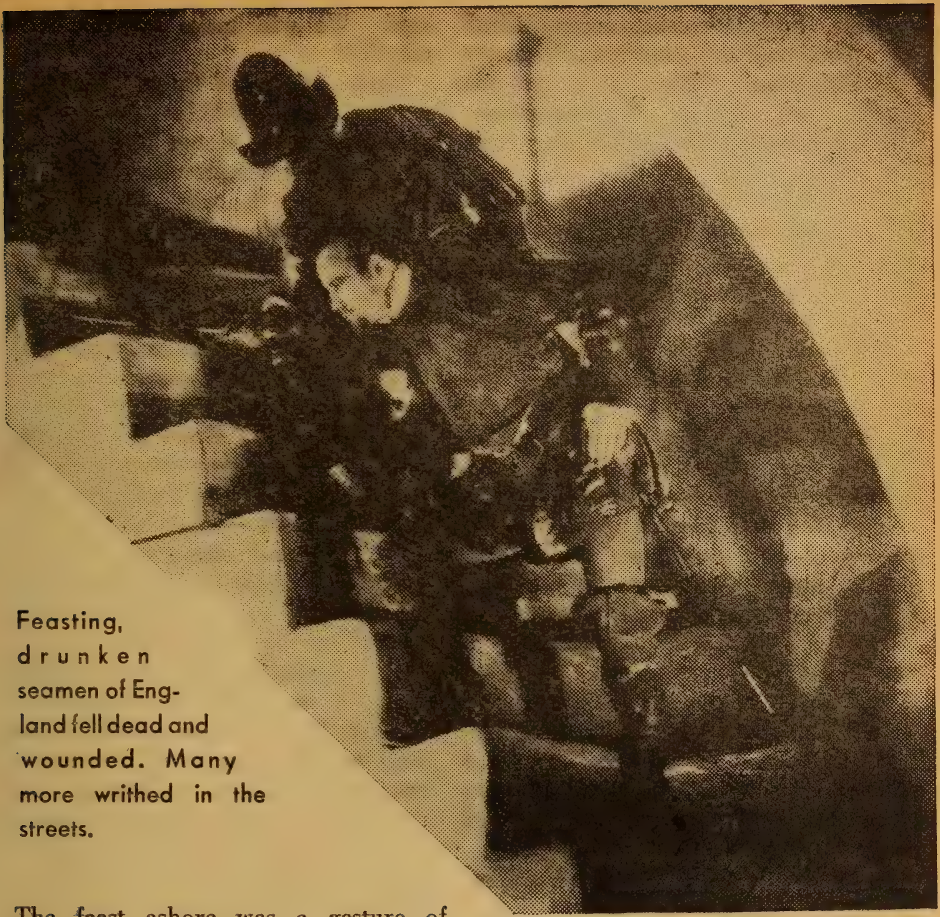
DRAKE the PIRATE

Disowned by his country, outlawed by the world, he shapes the destiny of an empire!

FRANCIS DRAKE, captain of the British ship *Judith,* had been drinking little of the wine from the Spanish goblets. Perhaps it was premontion or it may have been only distrust of the wily Spaniard who was their host.

Don Enriquez, the viceroy, had been friendly. His great galleon, with twelve other Spanish ships, lay in the harbor. The Spaniard had extended hospitality to the men of Merrie England. Those men from Devon, were commanded by John Hawkins, with Francis Drake, his cousin, as second.

The English ships, headed by the *Jesus,* the flagship of Queen Elizabeth, were outnumbered and outgunned. On the Queen's mission, they had gathered great treasure at San Juan. With this aboard, they now shared the harbor with the ships of Spain.



Feasting, drunken seamen of England fell dead and wounded. Many more writhed in the streets.

The feast ashore was a gesture of amity on the part of Don Enriquez. Nevertheless, this young Francis Drake eyed the wine and the food with suspicion. King Philip of Spain's conquests, his ambitions, his enmity toward England were too strongly in the mind of Francis Drake.

Twice he moved to warn his cousin, John Hawkins. But the English seamen were well drunk. Were their ships not filled with treasure? Were they not the guests of Don Enriquez?

Soon they would be returning to the harbor at Plymouth. Queen Elizabeth would greet them with tokens of her pride in them. Their report, they believed, would herald a new British conquest—a trade conquest of the seas!

Francis Drake did not warn John

CAST

MATHESON LANG	Francis Drake
ATHENE SEYLER	Queen Elizabeth
JANE BAXTER	Bess Sydenham
Henry Mollison	John Doughty
Donald Wolfit	Thomas Doughty
George Merritt	Tom Moone
Ben Webster	Lord Burghley

Directed by Arthur Woods.

From a play by Louis M. Parker. Adapted by Marjorie Deans, Clifford Grey, A. Tolnay, and N. Watson.

A novelized version of the Alliance Picture of the same title, released by First Division.

Hawkins. Spanish muskets accomplished this. Unobtrusively, the Spanish guests had withdrawn. Then guns flamed. Spanish archers joined the musketeers. Feasting, drunken seamen of England fell dead and wounded.

Many died beside the tables of the feast. Many more writhed in the streets. Francis Drake reached the harbor shore in the night. His ship, the *Judith*, was moored fortunately near.

Drake had discreetly kept most of his crew aboard. Tom Moone, one of his closest stand-bys, was on the deck. Drake saw that Hawkins' ships in the harbor had already been boarded. Two of them were burning furiously.

Then the four-masters carrying the treasure of their trade burst into flames! Spanish musket fire swept the wharves. Bullets hammered into the side of the *Judith*. Missiles made the gangway a death trap!

Drake slipped into the darkness. He reached the *Judith's* great hawser. Unhesitatingly, he started hand-over-hand up the great rope. The flare of a Spanish torch revealed him. Long muskets turned upon him.

Drake felt a twinge in one shoulder. Blood ran from one leg.

But Drake's lean-muscled arms propelled him upward. At the sea rail he saw Tom Moone.

"Beat the drum!" commanded Drake. "Man the guns!"

Bloody, but with perfect assurance, Drake shouted his orders from the center of a living hell. The great hawsers were slipped. The *Judith* swung free in the channel current. Spanish ships closed in to block her escape.

"MASTER, we are grievously outnumbered!" Tom Moone shouted.

But Drake's drum, that drum of battle and death which was to become famous on all of the Seven Seas, was rolling.

"We will cripple those we can!" thundered Drake. "Stand by to clear wreckage! We will make for the harbor's mouth!"

Shot cannonaded through the *Judith's* rigging. Men died bloodily on the deck. A galleon drew alongside. A boarding party of the treacherous Don Enriquez swarmed over the rails. It took the lives of half the *Judith's* crew to free her from the Spaniard's octopus-like grappling irons.

With masts shattered, one dragging in the sea, the *Judith* cleared port. Behind them, the Spaniards continued their killing, burning and sinking. But it was their companion ships and crews—not the *Judith*—who were the victims.

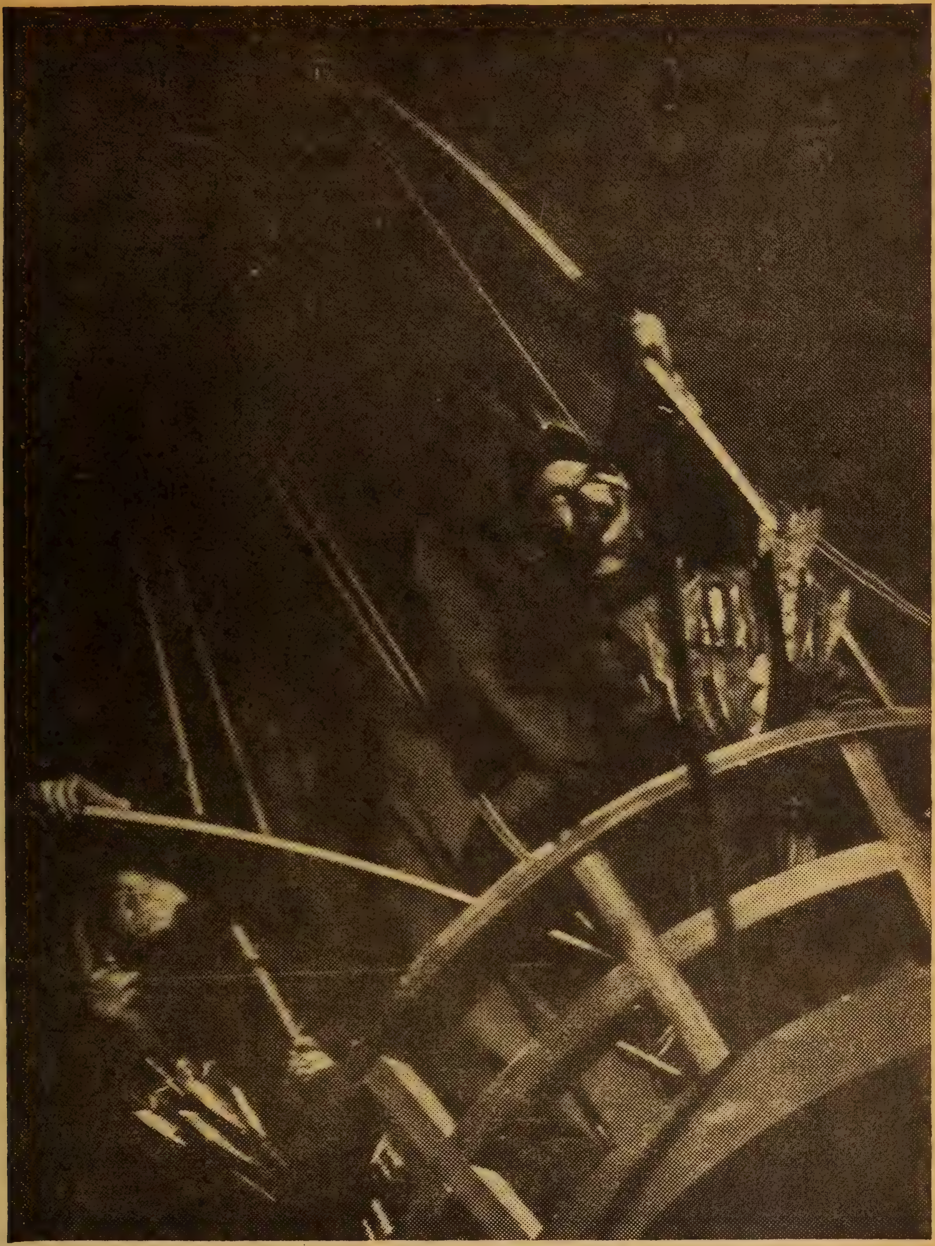
The crippled man-o'-war, sailing loggily, gained the shelter of the darkness.

"This I must report to Queen Elizabeth," mused Drake. "I must bear the ill tidings. Intrigue will prevail at court!"

As he tried to find sleep in the early morning hours, Drake knew but two things: that his good queen, Elizabeth, who was trying to strengthen England's sea power against the advice of her scheming counsellors, would be enraged at the wholesale loss and slaughter. And that a comely lass of Devonshire, Bess Sydenham, would be thankful for his safe return.

MEANWHILE, England, in the year of 1657, was ignorant of the fate which had befallen John Hawkins' ships. Elizabeth was in her council room with Burghley, Lord of the Treasury of England, and John Doughty, her soldier-advisor. They were discussing a treaty with King Philip of Spain—a treaty which Elizabeth mistrusted and from which both Burghley and Doughty planned to profit personally.

"Oh, for a man!" the queen cried. "Spain would cut my throat! Spain would set the Frenchwoman on my throne! Where is this Spanish envoy? I'll show him whether England is afraid to speak her mind!"



Spanish archers joined the musketeers.

Lord Burghley interposed, "Your Grace is justified, and yet Spain is mighty and England weak. Spain's fleet is invincible and England has none.

"That's a lie!" raged the queen. "When he returns, ask John Hawkins whether England has a fleet."

"Alas, madam," said John Doughty. "Word has just come that John Hawkins' expedition to San Juan has ended in disaster—the entire fleet has been sunk or captured."

Queen Elizabeth seemed stupefied. "And my own ship, the *Jesus of Lubeck?* What of her?"

"Captured," said John Doughty. "My brother Thomas had this word from a countryman of Devon, a certain Francis Drake whom he has brought to the palace."

"My men—my ships—my money——" said Queen Elizabeth. Then, to John Doughty's brother, she shouted, "Thomas Doughty! Who is this Francis Drake?"

A lovely, brown-eyed girl who stood with the ladies spoke eagerly. She was Bess Sydenham.

"Oh, I know him!" the girl said.

"Who asked you, wench?" snapped the Queen, turning upon her. "Hold your tongue! Master Doughty, where is Francis Drake?"

"He has come here," said Thomas Doughty, "hoping to see Your Grace, to inform you——"

"Then why wasn't he brought to me at once?"

Lord Burghley protested, "Why, the man is nothing but a common sailor."

"Bring this sailor to me!" commanded the Queen.

FRANCIS DRAKE, in his humble garb, seemed vastly out of place in the splendor of the Queen's council chamber. As he entered, he fell on one knee. Yet the bandage over one temple gave him a certain dignity.

"Now, Master Drake," said the Queen, "stand up and speak. What brings you here?"

"Rage, madam," said Drake, arising. "And a hunger for bloody vengeance."

"Here's plain speech at last," laughed the Queen. "Vengeance upon whom?"

"Upon a parcel of treasonable, damned rogues!"

"This is insufferable!" exclaimed Lord Burghley disgustedly.

"Aye," said the Queen, "for those who love fresh air. Well, Master Drake, what happened at San Juan?"

"Our goods were traded to our advantage," said Drake. "The viceroy, Don Enriquez, arrived with his galleon and twelve other ships. He gave his solemn word we should be unmolested. The next day we were on shore, all friendly and brotherly. We heard a sudden trumpet and the devils were at our throats, pouring into our ships."

"But you—on shore—how did you escape?" said the Queen.

"I crawled a hawser and we cut out my ship," said Drake. "Had it not been for the guns of the fort, we'd have sunk all of them!"

"You can tell he's from Devon," Bess Sydenham proudly whispered to one of her companion ladies-in-waiting.

"But all of the treasure and the ships are lost," said Drake.

Queen Elizabeth strode up and down the council chamber.

"My ships sunk! My men slain! Treacherously! It's unsupportable!"

"I give you my oath to return and wipe out the affront," Francis Drake vowed.

"Mr. Drake!" admonished the pompous Lord Burghley, seeking to make an impression for his own ends.

"Let him alone, Burghley," said Queen Elizabeth. "I need his advice."

The advice given by Francis Drake was amazing. He declared King Philip had raised a loan in Genoa to pay for troops to strike at the throne of Queen Elizabeth. It was an era when ships bearing gold sailed the seas in constant peril. The ships with the bullion had been driven into Plymouth by French privateers and could not get out.

"Seize these ships," advised Drake. "You will cripple Spain for years."

"But that's rank piracy!" shouted Lord Burghley.

"Francis Drake, that's magnificent!" declared the Queen. "The Genoese shall lend the money to Elizabeth instead of to Philip!" Then, laughing happily, "What more is in that bold brain of yours, pirate?"

It took the lives of half the "Judith's" crew to free her from the Spaniard's octopus-like grappling irons.

Lord Burghley fumed, "Shall a fellow like this bring England to disaster—to war with Spain?"

But Francis Drake was pointing to the globe of the world. His hand touched a spot.

"Here," he said, "is Nombre de Dios where King Philip stores his treasure from the South Atlantic. Riches unimaginable. Seize Nombre de Dios, and the wealth of Spain becomes the wealth of England!"

"Madam, I beg you——" began Lord Burghley.

"Silence, My Lord!" commanded the Queen. Then, to Drake: "But I fear King Philip is too strong."

"Thank God!" breathed Lord Burghley.

Drake faced the Lord of the Treasury with piercing eyes.

"My Lord," he said, "do you thank God for your enemy's strength? Philip has swallowed the Netherlands. Soon he may swallow France. How long would England hold out if she is as weak as you thank God for? No, my Lord! Let us thank God for stout oak for ships, and stout men to man them!"

Queen Elizabeth arose. Francis Drake was watching the pretty face of Bess Sydenham, now flushed with pride for her sailor lover.

Then shouted Queen Elizabeth, "By Heaven, this is a man! Go your own way, Francis Drake! Take what money you need. And keep your neck out of the noose!"

THE moon had not yet risen on Nombre de Dios, and the starry sky afforded very little light. However, that did not in any way dampen the gaiety which held sway over the governor's palace where Don Enriquez was entertaining.

His guests, many among them nobles high in the Spanish court, remarked among themselves that there had not been such happiness, such celebrating since the banquet of treachery given as a lure for the ill-fated British sailors. Everywhere, there was wine, beautiful women, laughter and music. Don Enriquez was especially proud of his party.

Then, suddenly, his ears became attuned to a strange sound—something more than music and laughter. He flung open a window with frantic haste.

Deep on the night, throbbing with a measured beat came the roll of drums! As he watched, a flaming arrow streaked across the sky! Enriquez leaped back into the ballroom.

"Stop! Stop! Everybody stop!" he screamed. "Drake is coming! His drums are sounding in our streets! His arrows are dropping fire onto our roofs! To arms! To arms!"

Bedlam broke loose in the palace. Alarm bells clanged. Commanders of the palace guard scurried about. Gay dancers fled in panic.

The throbbing drums of Drake now mingled with loudly sounding Spanish trumpets. Guards of Enriquez were pouring into the public square.

Drake ordered a barricade thrown up, Crouched behind an overturned cart, he gave his orders for the attack.

A flight of arrows quivered in the ground around the guards. Two men sprawled, wounded and dying. A flaming arrow bent a meteor's trail. The Spanish guards were attacking! Their captain rushed forward firing a pistol.

"Wait, lads, until they are on you!" rapped out Drake.

The captain's shot struck the cart. It imbedded itself in Drake's knee. Drake fired, struggling in agony to keep his feet. The captain of the guard fell. The guards attempted to deploy into a side street. They were greeted by a new beat of drums.

Followed by his men, Drake battled toward the palace, pain marking his every step. Baffled by the locked doors, the English crew swarmed over an iron balcony, scattering the now thoroughly disorganized guards.

Don Enriquez stood with drawn sword before the vault door. Drake confronted him.

"Your sword!" he demanded. "In the name of Queen Elizabeth of England! You are in debt for ships and lives taken by treachery at San Juan! How will you pay? With your life or with Spanish jewels and gold?"

Don Enriquez cringed. "Señor Drake, Spanish jewels and gold are at your disposal. You shall have more than your ships can carry."

While his men stood guard, Drake limped slowly into the treasure vault. Blood flowed from his wounded leg, staining the marble floor. His men eyed the gold and jewels greedily.

Drake stepped forward, putting his hand to his head. Then, suddenly, he toppled to the floor, already red with his blood. The sword of Enriquez clattered to the floor. Enriquez quickly snatched it up, and stood at bay, surrounded by English foes.

But Tom Moone was in no mood to fight at the risk of Drake's life. He shouted, "Come quickly, everyone! Leave the devils their gold! The captain is wounded! We must get him back to the ship!"

As quickly as they had descended upon the disorganized Spaniards, Drake's men now rallied about Tom Moone and helped carry their fallen leader back to the *Swan*. It was only after the last Englishman had left the palace that Don Enriquez emerged from the vault with his sword in his hand.

Sneering, boasting of a triumph which no one could dispute—had they not seen the English Dragon carried out, bleeding, from the vault which only he and Enriquez had entered—he cursed his guards for being cowards.

"How nobly you stood by while the pirates stormed my palace!" he shouted. He flung his sword among them. "Go to the English Dragon you fear before my sword slays the lot of you!"

"What brings you here?" . . . "Rage, madam, and a hunger for bloody vengeance!"

"NOT one thing out of all that treasure," groaned Drake.

Tom Moone was bandaging his wound. "Your life comes first, master," he said. "Carrying the treasure would have impeded our retreat."

"A worthy life indeed," said Drake. "Must I sail for England the second time with only a tale of ill fortune for the Queen?"

A commotion at the door of his cabin brought Drake staggering to his feet. The door burst open and a ragged native was flung to the floor at his feet.

"What's this?" he asked his sailors.

"Doubtless a Spanish spy," came the answer. "We caught him prowling about the after deck, although no one saw him come aboard. Shall we hang him, or——?"

"I am not spy," the native broke in hurriedly. "I am a friend. I swear it. I——"

"What brought you aboard the *Swan?*" Drake demanded.

"I came to see Your Excellency. I have news, señor. News of gold. In six days, men will come with mules bringing gold to Nombre de Dios from the Southern Seas. They are bad men, Señor Drake. My people—we are Mexicans—hate them because it was they who brought us in chains from our homes across the seas and made us slaves. You help us kill them, Señor Drake, and you can have their gold!"

One of the English sailors raised a mighty fist threateningly. "He's lying!" he roared. "It's a dirty trap to——"

"Silence!" Drake thundered. "Am I the captain here or not!" He stared his well-meaning sailor into submission, and then turned once more to the ragged peon. In a gentler and yet more persuasive tone he continued:

"You interest me, man. I must learn more of this caravan. But first you are hungry. You shall be fed. Then, when you are ready, we shall talk again." Turning to Tom Moone, "Fetch him some food. And give the order to put to sea at once. We shall wait safely off the coast if his story looks as good in an hour as I swear it does now!"

SIX days later, a party of strangely attired travelers made their way slowly along the route from Nombre de Dios to the Southern Seas. Their complexions were more the coloring of Englishmen than of Spaniards or Moors. Their clothes were more the rough materials of seamen than the finer textures of merchants.

They were traveling slowly, which was strange considering that they carried no provisions. To the casual observer, it might have seemed that the men were not anxious to reach any particular destination. But that this was not so was shown by the actions of their leader, a hawk-eyed man with a black, pointed beard.

Suddenly pointing into the distance, he shouted, "There they are!"

His followers quickly grouped about him, straining their eyes to pick out moving black specks in the distance.

"We are badly outnumbered, Master Drake!" exclaimed one.

"What are numbers to us?" Drake spat back, scornfully. "Come now, scatter before they see us! Then wait for my signal!"

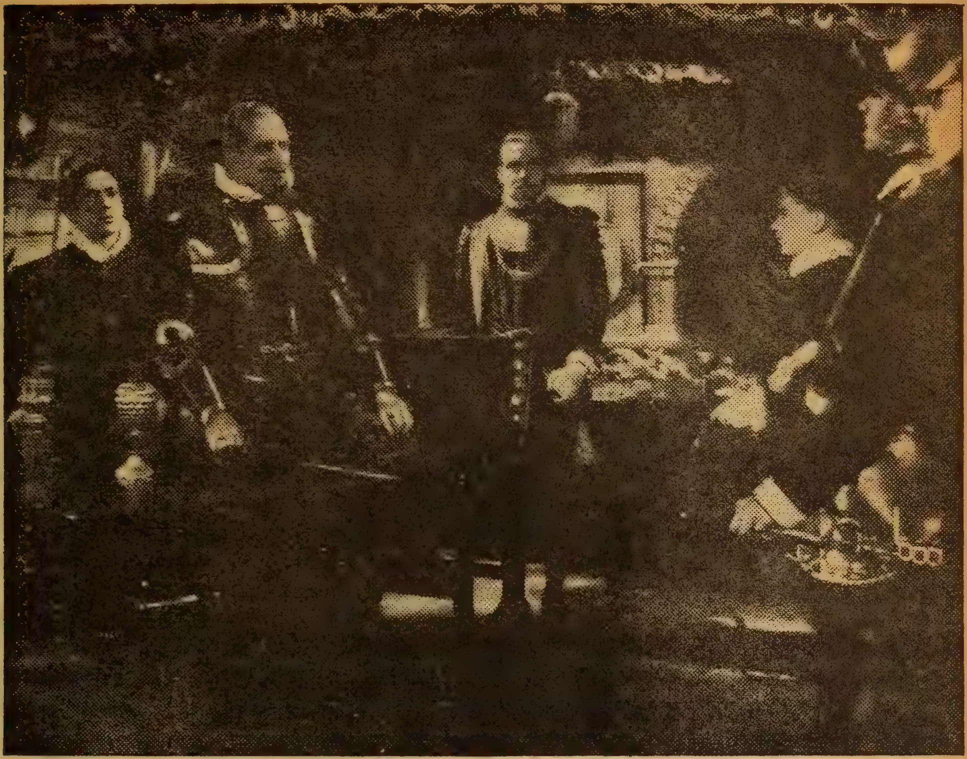
Quickly, Drake's band dissembled, some hiding behind bushes on the hillside below the trail, others darting behind huge boulders overhanging it. In silence, they waited while the unsuspecting caravan trudged slowly on toward the ambuscade.

As the tinkling of the mules' bells came closer, Francis Drake peered from behind his hiding place. He could see the glint of their knives. "Eighten men," he counted. "And we are but ten!"

Still closer came the treasure laden mules. Crouched behind a small berry bush, Drake heard the Spaniards talking and laughing among themselves. Then the nearing sounds of footsteps—of small hoofs on the stony trail!

Now the first of them were passing him! He could reach out and touch them with his hand if he chose. Silently, he counted the animals as they passed his hiding place. One—two—three—four—five. And then—six! The last!

Springing to his feet, Drake fired the



"They surely are in league with Satan!" shouted Don Pedro. He barked an order to a messenger.

pistol he had ready in his hand directly at the last man in the line. He crumpled into the dust without a sound.

The startled Spaniards whirled at the shot, their weapons ready for whatever was to come!

But they failed to appreciate, in its suddenness, the fury of the ambush into which they had unwittingly stumbled. From the rocks and bushes that concealed them, Drake's men sprang with ferocious shouts on the Spaniards!

It seemed to the treasure bearers that a hundred men were besieging them, so great was the noise and confusion. For a moment, they stood, bewildered. That moment was all Drake's men needed!

Quickly, each man dispatched an opponent. Those who were not killed immediately added to the din with their horrible screams of death!

Trampling over the fallen bodies, the English drove their adversaries into a panic-stricken group.

"Hold! Enough!" Drake cried.

His men paused at his command, watching their victims with cautious eyes.

"Bind these craven Spaniards, hand and foot," he ordered. "Then minister to the wounded. Killing soldiers is one matter, but slaughtering sheep——" He paused, contemptuous.

"But shall we take them with us?" Tom Moone asked.

"No. All we want is their gold. See that some of their food and wine is left for them, too, should they be overly long without help."

Francis Drake's orders were carried out fully by his willing men who had escaped almost without a scratch, thanks to their shrewd leader's brilliant battle plan. With the still living Spaniards safely trussed up, Drake and his men calmly faced back toward the sea, whipped the burros into action, and disappeared with a fortune that was to surpass their wildest dreams!

IN the gray, quaint old town of Plymouth, in Devon, Sunday bells tolled the people to church. Sabbath calm brooded over the forest of masts beyond the mossy quays.

Adding to the calm was a spirit of mourning, for a rumor had spread through the town that Drake's ship had gone down with all hands at sea.

Inside the ancient church, Parson Fletcher might have been preaching a memorial.

"There is a lesson," he said, "in the tragedy that must have overtaken our dear brethren at sea."

But outside on a knobby hill, children surrounded an old man with a telescope.

"What do you see? What do you see?" they chanted eagerly.

"It be the ship of Captain Drake," said the old man. "Run and bring the folk to the quay."

Parson Fletcher droned on, "They that go down to the sea in ships——"

But a dirty-faced boy stole into the back of the church. He whispered to the nearest man. This man whispered to another.

A woman caught the whisper. It passed along. Noiselessly the back pews began to empty.

"This death may come to the lowest and the highest among you," exhorted the pastor. "We are here today and gone——"

"T'r'rum! T'r'rum! T'r'rum—tum—tumity-tum!"

The drums of Drake drowned the pastor's sermon. The pastor himself joined the crowd rushing to greet the returned ship of England's mightiest adventurer.

Francis Drake seemed to have eyes for only one face.

"Bess! Bess Sydenham!" he smiled.

John Doughty stood scowling at one side. Thomas Doughty, who knew nothing of his brother's treachery toward England and hatred for Drake, warmly greeted the returned captain.

"Well done, indeed, Francis Drake!"

"Bess!" said Drake. "Thomas Doughty, my friend! See what we've brought! Open the chests, boys!"

Gold and jewels gleamed in the Sabbath sun. The folk of Old Plymouth gasped.

"It was to have been used against England," said Drake. "Now English ships shall be built with it!"

He caught the hand of Thomas Doughty.

"My good friend," he declared. "It was you who took me to the Queen. Now you shall share in my good fortune."

Drake stepped aside with Bess Sydenham.

"You waited, my dear?" he said.

"Of course I waited," said the girl shyly.

"And I've kept my promise," said Drake, bringing forth a lustrous string of pearls.

JOHN DOUGHTY scowled at his brother, Thomas.

"Is this man Drake really your friend?" he demanded.

"If he is your enemy, John, then he cannot be my friend," declared Thomas Doughty.

"Then," said John Doughty, "you must ride with me to London. Lord Burghley must know of this news at once. Unless we hurry, our work in bringing about the Spanish treaty will be ruined!"

The two brothers departed. In secret John had been working with Lord Burghley to bring about a treaty with Spain that would be to their personal advantage.

Sir George and Lady Sydenham, followed by Parson Fletcher, approached Drake and their daughter.

"Mother—father!" exclaimed the joyous girl. "This is Master Drake whom I met at the Queen's court!"

"I am happy to meet Mistress Sydenham's parents," said Drake.

Lady Sydenham's tone was frigid.

"Thanks, and we must wish you good day, sir. Bess, it is time to go home. Come, George."

As Parson Fletcher grasped Drake's hand, the captain smiled ruefully. Clearly, he was still a common sailor in the minds of Lord and Lady Sydenham.

Had Captain Drake heard the words of John and Thomas Doughty and witnessed their hasty departure, he would have been less composed as Parson Fletcher offered up thanks for the safe return of Drake's ship!

AN event accompanied by great pomp and ceremony was taking place at Hampton Court. Queen Elizabeth, somewhat distraught over the news of the destruction of Captain Drake's expedition, was dressing for the occasion.

But outside in the court, John and Thomas Doughty had arrived. They were inquiring hastily for Lord Burghley.

Lord Burghley at this moment joined a little group in the anteroom of the Queen. Among these were representatives of King Philip, of Spain, present to get Elizabeth's signature on the treaty. Lord Burghley declared this was a joyful day for England.

John and Thomas Doughty came breathlessly into the room.

"Drake has landed at Plymouth, Lord Burghley!" gasped John.

The crafty Lord Burghley was quick to think. His intention was plain. Queen Elizabeth must not know of Drake's return until the treaty with Spain had been signed.

Queen Elizabeth entered the royal council chamber, ignorant of the news of Drake, and of the arrival of John and Thomas Doughty. The Spanish envoys at her feet. She indicated a jeweled pendant on her breast.

"You may tell our dear brother Philip we take a rare pleasure in his gift," she said.

After the brief exchange of amenities, the Royal Secretary unrolled the treaty document. His voice began droning.

"—His Catholic and Most August Majesty Don Philip—King of Spain—and Elizabeth, by the Grace of God, Queen of England—to swear true friendship and amity to one another for themselves and their people——"

At this time in the anteroom, John and Thomas Doughty were in sharp dispute. Thomas declared Francis Drake to be his friend and all Spaniards his enemies. John cunningly suggested Thomas use his friendship for Drake to deceive him. The will of John Doughty prevailed.

The Secretary completed reading the voluminous document.

"—given at our Castle of Windsor, the 11th day of August, 1573, in the fifteenth year of our Reign——"

Wholly unaware of the news awaiting her, the deceived Queen affixed her signature to the treaty. The Great Seal was attached.

Immediately the demeanor of Don Guerau changed. The wily Spaniard believed in striking quickly.

"Your Grace," he said, "a most regrettable incident has occurred. News has just been brought that one of your subjects has attempted to ravish the town of Nombre de Dios in a most piratical fashion."

There was shocked waiting in the council chamber.

"Nombre de Dios?" murmured the Queen.

Don Guerau persisted, smiling triumphantly. "King Philip protests this outrage. He begs the delinquent, who is now in England, shall be punished. His name is Francis Drake."

"Get about! Get about! Get some pieces into action!"

Queen Elizabeth maintained regal composure. She spoke firmly.

"Inform our brother Philip his important request shall receive our full consideration, and I am more than sure he will be appeased by our decision."

The Queen descended from the dais with unperturbed dignity.

BUT in the anteroom, the temper of Queen Elizabeth burned upon those about her. She realized to the full that she had been foully tricked. She waved aside explanations and demanded to speak with Thomas Doughty alone.

"This puts me in a pretty quandary," said Queen Elizabeth to Thomas Doughty. "How to please King Philip and yet reward my bold and deserving pirate——"

She considered him thoughtfully.

"You are taken with Bess Sydenham, are you not?" she asked, suddenly.

Thomas Doughty's heart leaped. He sensed what was about to happen. He felt, too, that the Queen was ignorant of Drake's love for the girl.

"Your Grace is most discerning," he replied, bowing slightly to hide his smile of triumph. "Would that Mistress Sydenham found as much to be admired in me!"

"Well, she is young and headstrong. But you shall marry her, my word on it. And you shall do something for me."

"Your Grace!" exclaimed the delighted Thomas Doughty.

Well he knew the Queen's will must prevail, even with the girl who was doubtless fascinated by the pirate, Francis Drake. Thomas Doughty was already gloating in his first triumph over the pirate.

"Now," said Queen Elizabeth, "go to Sir George Sydenham. Tell him I wish to meet secretly at his house—Francis Drake."

Thus, the following day, by the Queen's order, Sir George Sydenham welcomed Francis Drake to his home with a hospitality he did not feel.

By the order of Sir George, Bess Sydenham was strictly confined to an upper room. Drake looked about the beatuiful garden in vain for the girl he had hoped to see.

The arrival of Queen Elizabeth with a few of her courtiers, and with John Doughty, temporarily ended Drake's bitter suspicion the girl was being kept from him.

When Drake knelt before the Queen, she slapped his shoulder.

"Master Drake," she said, "come, let us walk apart."

Shocked courtiers withdrew. Such informality had never before been known.

"And how is my pirate?" smiled the Queen.

"Oh, ma'am!" was all Drake could manage in his confusion.

"Upon my soul," said Queen Elizabeth. "You have so many enemies, I begin to think you must be a great man. Always I hear of your exploits. Drake has attacked Nombre de Dios! Drake has captured a fortune in Spanish gold! And now the King of Spain desires me to punish you!"

Drake bowed deeply, but his smile was whimsical.

"I did but regain our losses, Your Grace. If Spain continues, she will rule the world. Punish me by all means, if I have offended you—but not to please the King of Spain. Do not be deceived. All treaties, trade agreements mean but one thing to King Philip—time. Time to build ships for his great fleet—an invincible armada!"

Queen Elizabeth smiled, and stepped carefully close.

"Matters like these must be spoken of behind a hedge, pirate. Aye, tall enough to hide us from Lord Burghley. Come, you shall help me to plant it."

Lord Burghley attempted to conceal his chagrin when Queen Elizabeth and Drake rejoined the group in the garden.

"My Lord Treasurer," said the Queen, "I have a matter that concerns us. We will have great profit from fruits and spices of Alexandria, whither Master Drake will shortly sail. Should not the nation buy a share?"

"The nation can take no share in any unsafe enterprise," said Lord Burghley.

"Then, Master Drake," proclaimed the Queen, "I fear you shall have to be content with finances from my own private coffers."

While Lord Burghley became angrily silent, John Doughty unexpectedly offered to sail with Drake.

Lord Burghley immediately said to John's brother, "Sail with Drake also, Thomas, and help John wrest the command from him."

"You think we could do that?" said Thomas Doughty.

"Every soldier with the fleet would be with you!"

"I'll go," consented Thomas Doughty. He sought out Drake who at this moment was accepting the offer of Parson Fletcher to become chaplain of his new trade feet. The Queen stood with them. Thomas Doughty approached humbly.

"Will you take an unschooled soldier to sea, Francis Drake?" said Thomas.

"Aye," said Drake heartily, taking his hand, "when that soldier is my friend who would help me to my true purposes."

"Share them with this friend then, and with no other, Master Pirate," laughed the Queen. "But my Lord Burghley must be kept in ignorance of your real errand."

"He shall, Your Grace," declared Drake. "Have I not royal sanction for my voyage?"

"Officially no," said the Queen gravely. "But we do account that he who strikes at Drake, strikes at Elizabeth!"

BESS SYDENHAM, escaped from her locked room, came running into the garden. The Queen exclaimed at her appearance. She told her Thomas Doughty was about to sail with Drake.

Bess was looking at Drake, and she said, "Oh, sailing again, so soon?"

"So soon!" said the Queen. "So set yourself to please him!"

But Queen Elizabeth was speaking for Thomas Doughty.

A short while later, Bess Sydenham stood beside Francis Drake in a secluded nook of the garden. Drake's arm stole caressingly around the lovely girl. She drew away hastily.

"No, no, Francis!" she protested. "You forget the Queen's orders. If Thomas Doughty comes back without you, I shall be forced to marry him."

"Then by heaven!" exclaimed Drake. "He shall marry my widow! The Queen herself cannot force you to marry two husbands! You will marry me before I sail, secretly?"

"Yes, yes!" said the girl breathlessly. "You are mad!"

With only Mothre Moone and her son, Tom, as witnesses, Bess Sydenham that same evening became the secret bride of Drake.

Parson Fletcher bestowed his blessing. The pair stood apart.

"My love will never fail you," whispered Bess. "What is your great purpose?"

"To make England mistress of the seas!" declared Drake.

FIVE ships lay becalmed at St. Julian. Francis Drake paced the deck of his flagship the *Golden Hind*. He had heard the mutterings of his crews.

Some of his men were saying Thomas Doughty had bewitched Drake with fine ways and fine foods. There had been too much good cheer in Drake's own cabin.

But the thoughts of Drake to-day were somber. Thomas Doughty had revealed that a valuable ring he wore had been a token of esteem from Lord Burghley. Drake had reason to doubt the sincerity of his friend.

Now there came word of trouble brewing aboard one of the ships, the *Mary*.

Tom Moone had come forward with a direct accusation.

"The crew of the *Mary* is restless because Thomas Doughty has taught them to be traitors!" declared the loyal Tom Moone.

At that, Thomas Doughty had drawn his sword. He had been prevented from spitting the valiant Tom.

"Dares Drake to doubt me?" Thomas Doughty had raged. "Is not my slightest word to be believed sooner than the oath of a sailor?"

Francis Drake, though saddened, was beginning to see a great light. Thomas and John Doughty were held pending an inquiry.

And in the chest of Thomas Doughty, aboard the *Mary*, Drake had come upon direct evidence that Thomas Doughty was in league with the conniving Lord Burghley.

Soldiers and sailors on the *Mary* who had protested were confounded by the treachery Drake had revealed. Drake was forced to bring his friend before the shipboard court.

Before this court, Drake stated, "My masters, the Queen gave me special commandment that of all men, Lord Burghley should be kept in ignorance of our true errand, by reason of his fear of Spain. I have here papers showing Thomas Doughty has given Lord Burghley a full plot of our voyage."

Drake confronted Thomas Doughty.

"Did Lord Burghley send you with us to hinder our enterprise and to report our deeds?"

"Yes," admitted Thomas Doughty. "For he feared your rashness."

"Thomas Doughty, you were my friend," declared Drake. I cannot be your judge. It is for this court to say whether you be innocent or guilty. If guilty, the punishment is death."

The verdict was guilty by unanimous vote of the court. Even then, Drake gave Thomas Doughty the choice of execution or trial in England before the Lords of the Royal Council.

"No," replied Thomas. "I shall not return. I beseech you only to grant me the death of a gentleman."

Drake's hand gripped that of the condemned man. The drums rolled the dirge of the doomed. Up above, willing hands were dropping a rope from the yard-arm. Excited sailors, seeing in Thomas Doughty's doom a release from the gloom and misery that had beset the fleet, fashioned a strong noose at the rope's end.

Together, John and Thomas Doughty walked to the fatal spot. John's hand gripped his brother's forearm like a circlet of steel. Without speaking, John knew he must be dedicated to completing his brother's plans from that moment on!

They neared the edge of the poop deck. They exchanged quick clasp of hands. John stepped back. A sailor fitted the noose around the condemned man's neck. The drummers among the sailors grouped near the mizzenmast began a hushed roll on their drums at a signal from Drake himself. The slack in the rope was taken up.

Throughout the operations, Thomas Doughty had stood with eyes riveted on the blue horizon. Unflinchingly, he now turned to Drake and raised his eyebrows in question. Drake nodded.

Taking his last full breath of life, Thomas Doughty leaped high and clear of the deck. His body dropped swiftly toward the deck below to be checked with a resounding *snap* by the rope.

For a few grisly seconds, while the drums rose in their deathly crescendo, the corpse dangled in diminishing arcs—a horrible, once human pendulum!

As Francis Drake turned away, his eyes on the disconsolate John Doughty, he first realized the full strain of condemning and executing a man whom he had considered his friend. What he did not know was that he had just caused the death of a man who loved his secret bride—the lovely Bess!

TWO years had passed when the ships of Francis Drake entered Thames Estuary and were docked at Deptford.

Banners flew over the crowd. A woman exclaimed, "Will the Queen pass this way?" A man said, "And that is the ship that sailed around the world?"

"Aye," said another, "that is the *Golden Hind*."

Francis Drake grimly inspected his ragged crew. They were a motley lot to be presented before Queen Elizabeth.

In the crowd, Lord Burghley rode up on his horse. John Doughty hastened to his side.

"My Lord," said John Doughty, "I have no word from you touching the prosecution of Francis Drake for the murder of my brother."

Lord Burghley was plainly disinclined to be committed.

"To speak plainly, my friend, it is not in your interest, nor in mine, that this matter be brought to light."

"Then my brother's blood cries to me for vengeance!" declared John Doughty. "I shall take the law into my own hands!"

Shouts of the crowd ended the exchange. The litter of Queen Elizabeth appeared. Francis Drake crossed from his ship and knelt before her.

"That one man in so small a ship should do so great a work!" exclaimed the Queen. Then, eyeing his sailors lined up to greet their Queen, "God's mercy, what forlorn images are these?"

Drake's ragged grew moved restlessly. Lord Burghley came to the Queen's side.

"Might you not have dressed the men, sir, against Her Grace's coming?" he demanded stiffly.

"The men are dressed as best befits Her Grace's notice," said Drake. "For so they stood, in rags, broken and weary, when there were yet twenty thousand miles of untraveled sea between us and the homes we longed for."

"My poor mariners," murmured Queen Elizabeth. "My heart aches for you."

TO the table of the feast aboard the *Golden Hind* that night came notables of many foreign countries, all at the Queen's invitation.

"We should all be honored to be the honored guests of England's great admiral, Francis Drake," said Queen Elizabeth.

"Spain is not honored!" declared a Spanish envoy. "She has been despoiled to furnish the pirate's table! It is at your own risk you show him favor. King Philip is grievously offended."

"I had thought to eat first. But I must needs give heed to the omnipotent Philip. Master Drake," Elizabeth said sternly, turning to her host, "I must cast you out at the command of a foreign prince. Give me your sword!"

"Have I deserved this indignity?" objected Drake.

"Give me your sword, I say!" said Queen Elizabeth imperiously. "Kneel before me, Francis Drake!"

Drake bent his knee. The harsh action of the Queen was bewildering to her courtiers. Lord Burghley smiled slyly.

Queen Elizabeth struck Drake's shoulder with his sword.

"Good people," she proclaimed, "thus do I honor the man who opened the seas of the world to English ships and taught Englishmen to be sailors. Rise up, SIR Francis Drake!"

The Spaniards leaped to their feet.

"Madam!" blazed Mendoza. "You have put an outrageous affront upon my King! Give us leave to withdraw!"

Queen Elizabeth inclined her head with a scornful smile.

Bess Sydenham stood near the Queen's table. Drake extended his hand to her. The girl blushed and curtsied.

"Your Grace," said the girl, "I shall try to bear mv new honor with dignity."

"In Heaven's name!" said the Queen. "What is it to you, child?"

"If you please, madam, you have made me Dame Drake."

"Why, you little scapegrace, there needs a parson for that, and a ring, and the Lord knows what."

The new Lady Bess drew a ring from her pocket.

"By your leave, madam, we have had all that years ago."

From the deck nearby came a low oath. John Doughty had seen more than he could stand. He leaped forward, his knife gleaming in the sun!

Lord Burghley leaped in front of Sir Francis Drake. "Beware!" he shouted. "John Doughty!"

Tom Moone led the men who leaped to their master's defense. They seized the raging man with the knife.

"I thank you, Lord Burghley, for saving my life," said Drake.

"I pray you, thank me not with your words, Sir Francis," said Lord Burghley with deep meaning, "but with your silence. John Doughty will trouble you no more."

"No," said Drake deliberately. "Nor you, either."

Meanwhile Mendoza had joined a group of Spaniards on the quay.

"Whither now?" questioned one.

"Back with all haste to Spain," said Mendoza. "King Philip must send Elizabeth another necklace. Not of rubies this time, but of ships."

THE comparatively small fleet of England lay in the harbor at Plymouth. From the sea raged a gale. Francis Drake played at bowls with Lady Bess and a group of his friends.

A seaman came in haste through the streets. Crowds divided as the sailor passed. For the Invincible Armada of King Philip was driving before the gale upon the wind-locked fleet of Sir Francis Drake.

"Sir Francis!" cried the man. "The Spaniards are upon us!"

Drake smiled. "How many ships did you see?"

"A half moon of ships seven miles across, sir!"

Drake calmly finished his game of bowls. His final shot was a perfect hit.

"Now!" he said. "Order the drums to be beaten! We must be out of the harbor before nightfall!"

"With the wind against us, impossible?" said his companion, Lord Howard Locke.

"Aye, My Lord! With the wind against us!" said Drake. "Sound the alarm! Let the beacons blaze from every hill! Start a girdle of fire around England!"

As night fell, the hills about the harbor bore flaming beacons of fire.

In this same darkness the Spanish Armada lay to a mile or more off shore. On the decks of the flagship, an officer said to Admiral de Valdez, "We need not strike to-night. What can the English do in the teeth of such a wind?"

"True enough," replied Don Pedro. "We spend to-night in prayers while the English gnash their teeth in the harbor of Plymouth."

BUT from Plymouth harbor, Drake's ships were slowly putting to sea in the Stygian darkness. One by one, the men-o'-war were being pulled into the tearing gale. Husky sailors in small boats were rowing desperately, towing the ships of Sir Francis Drake.

An order came from Drake.

"When around the point, hoist sails and tack against the wind!"

On the black deck beside Drake a man spoke.

"The Spaniards still think we are bottled up in Plymouth harbor. They'll get the surprise of their lives to-morrow morning when they find us so close beside them."

"Nay," replied Drake. "We must let them know sooner than that."

"Why? Do we engage them to-night then?"

"What is your plan?" inquired a second man.

"I shall send a squadron of eight lighted ships to maneuver between the Armada and the land," said Drake. "The Spanish will set all their strength in that direction, thinking it is our whole fleet. We will lay our best ships quietly out to sea upon their flank."

GREAT seas smashed over the Spanish Armada. It was clearly impossible for ships to emerge in the teeth of such a gale. But a lookout hailed.

"Warn the Admiral! Eight ships are coming out from shore!"

"They surely are in league with Satan!" shouted Don Pedro. "How else could they have got out in such a wind?" He barked an order to a messenger who sped off.

"They're running back and forth like ants," observed one of his men. "And like ants, they cannot hurt us."

A messenger stood beside the Admiral.

"Your order has been obeyed, sir," he reported. "All cannon are set to withstand a frontal attack, My Lord."

The wide arc of the Armada was converged upon the eight lighted ships. All guns were trained upon those apparently puny craft. Smashing rollers broke against the anchored fleet of Spain.

Aboard the darkened *Revenge*, Drake stood in the storm. His best ships were tearing sails to shreds, battling into the drive of the wind. But now the Spaniards lay between these ships and the shore.

"The whole Spanish flank lies open to our guns," reported a sailor.

"Then let them have it!" thundered Drake.

Tom Moone had the honor of applying the lighted fuse to the first cannon. A solid shot shrieked with the wind. The long line of broadside guns belched flame.

Aboard the Armada, Spanish soldiers and sailors huddled in sudden alarm. The huge ships were suddenly being riven by the solid shot of the English Dragon! And there were no cannon in position to return the fire!

Iron hurled through the close-hauled rigging. One Spanish galleon reeled, her side smashed by the first broadside.

Spanish soldiers scuttled helplessly about.

"Get about! Get about!" shouted de Valdez. "Get some pieces into action."

But the Spanish fire came too late. By the time they were ready to fight back, all of Drake's fleet was swiftly withdrawing, and the Spanish Armada was crippled, putting about, heading for the nearest refuge, Calais!

THE Invincible Armada lay in the neutral harbor of Calais.

"Here's to the good people of Calais," said de Valdez. "By being around us, they protect us from the enemy behind."

But in the night, outside the harbor, men with torches were aboard two ships of Sir Francis Drake. A light flickered far at sea.

"There's the signal," exclaimed a sailor "The tide is setting in. Spread the sails and set them alight."

Rapidly, the men hoisted the canvas and drenched it with oil. Their torches were applied in a dozen places. Soon the rigging of both ships was a mass of flames!

Waiting only long enough to be sure that their ships were headed directly for the channel into the harbor, the men dropped over the sides into their waiting boats. Straight for the harbor mouth, headed the floating infernos!

Aboard the Spanish flagship, a lookout suddenly shouted, "Señor! Señor! El Draque is coming with ships of fire!"

De Valdez was quick to act. "Cut the cables and put out to sea!" he commanded. "We must escape this trap!"

With all sails set, two fiery ships entered the mouth of the harbor. They bore swiftly along the only channel like blazing monsters of doom. The Spanish Armada moved, but not in time. A galleon collided with a ship of fire and burst into flames. Sparks ignited a second vessel.

Sailors with spars attempted to fend off the huge floating torches. Now another Spanish ship was burning!

Drake's English fleet was swiftly closing in on the harbor. The rudderless flagship of de Valdez drifted near. Drake ordered the *Revenge* to the attack. Muskets flamed. Bowmen showered arrows upon the stricken Spaniards.

"Out with the nets and board!" ordered Drake.

His willing seamen leaped into action. Securing de Valdez' ship to the *Revenge*, they hurtled across the ships' railings onto the enemy decks!

But they found little resistance. Huddled in frightened groups, the Spaniards showed only too plainly that the superb strategy of Drake, the noble pirate, had broken more than the ships of Spain. He had broken the morale of the greatest aggregation of fighting sailors the world had ever known!

When de Valdez approached slowly to surrender his sword to Drake, he spoke the hearts of his weary and terrified sailors when he said, simply, "There is no shame."

IMPATIENTLY awaiting news from the fleet, Queen Elizabeth had massed her land troops. It was her great fear that Drake had finally been conquered and that Spain, enraged at England, would send an invading army into the island. In an effort to hide her anxiety, she spoke to her troops.

"Englishmen and soldiers!" proclaimed the Warrior Queen. "I am your queen and a woman. Yet in this time of danger, I swear I have the heart of a king. Sooner than any dishonor should grow by me, I myself will take up arms."

As cheers thundered from the troops, the slender figure of a lovely girl appeared beside the Queen.

"Why, my little Bess," said the Queen. "I thougtht you far away in Devon.

"I was, Madam, too far. Give me leave to stay with you, who must be the first to hear news of the fleet."

"So you shall. We will await the news together."

The Queen's speech with Lady Bess was broken by the sound of a trumpet. From the harbor below arose shouting.

At the Queen's command, the colors were struck and the soldiers disbanded. A small boat pulled up to the jetty in the harbor. In it stood a stalwart figure. Above his head drooped the conquered flag of Spain.

Sir Francis Drake presented the Spanish flag and kissed the hand of Queen Elizabeth.

"The Invincible Armada is vanquished," he announced. "We have opened the gates of the sea and given you the keys of the world. The little spot you stand on has become the center of the earth."

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THE NEW FRONTIER

They sacrificed everything to come to this new land, only to face the same old evil. But here were men to cope with it!

CAST

JOHN WAYNE	John Dawson
MURIEL EVANS	Hannah Lewis
WARNER RICHMOND	"Ace" Holmes
Alfred Bridge	Kit Masters
Murdock McQuarrie	Tom Lewis
Sam Flint	Milt Dawson

A novelized version of the Republic Picture of the same title soon to be released

Pictureplay by Robert Emmett.
Directed by Carl Pierson.
A PAUL MALVIN Production.

BEHIND the doors of the First Chance saloon the hubbub of loud talk and laughter grew suddenly louder, then as suddenly died while gunfire popped. Men tumbled hurriedly out onto the wooden porch. Then a single man staggered through the swinging doors, followed by a fusillade of bullets that sprawled him on his face at the feet of the shirtsleeved man who came after him, a smoking gun in each hand.

Even to the townspeople who gathered curiously from the other side of the street, the eyeshade he wore identified the gunman as a card dealer.

An elegant figure—frock-coated, patent-leather-booted—strolled through the crowd, from the saloon. This was "Ace" Holmes, owner of the First Chance and every gambling concession in town.

"What happened, Hank?" he demanded of the dealer, tapping the ash from his cigar.

"This fella claimed I drew from the bottom at the card table," Hank explained loudly. "He went for his gun and I had to let him have it!"

A little man pushed forward. "He didn't go for his gun!" he contradicted. "Everybody knows Bert Sawyer never carries a gun." He glanced around at Tom Lewis, standing near by with his daughter Hannah and the minister. "You know that, Mister Lewis," he appealed.

Ace shot Hank a quick look, and the dealer amended hastily: "Well, he made a quick move for his hip. How did I know he didn't have a gun?"

Ace rolled his long cigar to the side of his mouth with a decisive movement and took command.

"Looks to me like self defense," he said shortly. "The man acted as though he was going to draw. He should have been more careful." He stepped in front of Hank and deliberately shoved him back toward the saloon door. With narrowed eyes he watched while the townspeople picked up what was left of Bert Wilson.

Tom Lewis stared soberly at the arrogant back as Ace walked into his saloon. "I'd like to have a talk with you folks," he said to the silent group about him, and led the way to the little church.

He looked intently into the solemn faces of these sturdy people who had come across the border of Indian Territory in last year's thunder of galloping hoofs and racing wagon wheels, to stake claims and establish homes in the new land.

"Something must be done," he told them. "Ace Holmes and his crowd are running their saloons and gambling games twenty-four hours a day. How long are we going to go on living in this constant roar of guns, not knowing what minute which of us'll be next? Bert Sawyer was a fine man. There's no question he was killed in cold blood, without a chance to defend himself. And he's the fourth man since we've been here. We've got to get law and order before these men completely tear down the thing we're trying to build."

There was a moment's silence. Then an older man said slowly:

"You're right, Lewis. But who can we get? Who's capable of handling these roughnecks?"

"Why not put it up to Milt Dawson?" Lewis suggested thoughtfully. "He certainly proved his courage when he led us in here, as scout."

A murmur from the others approved his suggestion, and Lewis nodded vigorously. "When he comes in to-nigh., we'll go down and talk to him."

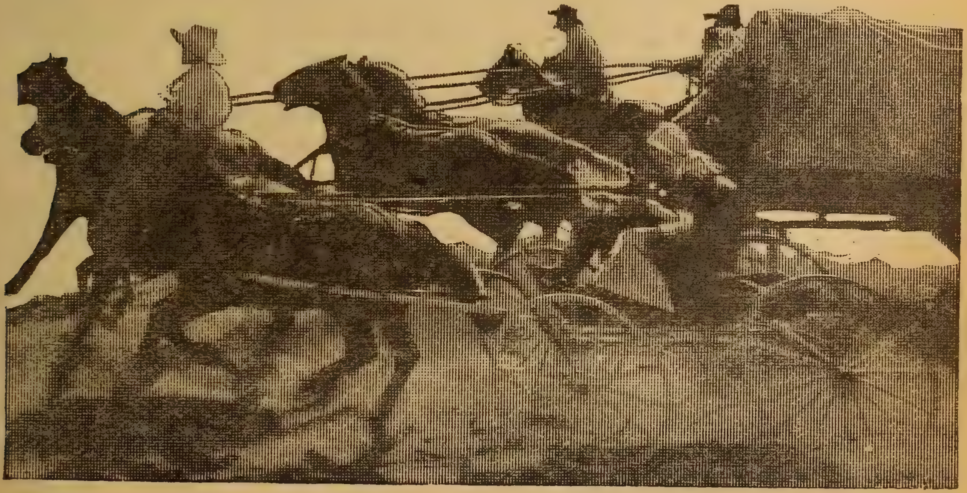
MILT DAWSON was sitting in his shack talking with Hannah Lewis when the men came to him that night. It was a rough place, suitable to his trade and to him—a grizzled, steely-eyed veteran prairie scout. As he smoked and mended a saddle he talked to Hannah of his son, John, telling her slyly that folks back in Kansas were laying bets about when Hannah and John would be married. She blushed a little but answered him straightforwardly:

"John and I have talked about it, but he said he wouldn't marry me while he's in this trail riding business. I wish he'd give it up."

"Oh, he'll have to give it up soon, Hannah," Milt assured her. "With these new railroads reaching into the wastelands, there won't be work for us always." He looked up as a knock and a voice demanded entrance.

Milt bade them enter and gazed curiously into the solemn faces of the townsmen who crowded into his little place.

"Milt, we've come to you for help,"



His wagon train was in full flight, the wagons careening madly!

Tom Lewis broached the matter abruptly.

"What did you want of me, Tom?"

"We need law and order. Some one faster with a gun than they are—the gamblers. Some one they'll fear. With your reputation, you're the man for it. We're askin' you, Milt, to be our sheriff."

Milt gazed from face to face. He shook his head. "I'm afraid I can't take it."

"We'll pay you well," Tom urged. "You can name your own price."

"It ain't the money, folks," he told them. "But my boy John, and I, have obligations that we must live up to. Outfits to guide across these plains. Packin' *people* is my business, not packin' a star."

There was a disappointed murmur, and the minister said urgently:

"You guided us in here, Milt, and whenever there was trouble on the trail, you straightened it out, without killings. There's trouble here, and we're asking you to lend a hand."

Milt looked thoughtful for a minute. Then he got to his feet.

"That's different, Parson. As friends, I'll go up there an' do something."

He walked out into the night, going with big easy strides up the middle of the dusty main street toward the First Chance.

The place was ablaze with lights, and as he drew near, Milt Dawson could hear beneath the clamor of voices and music the steady rattle of the roulette wheel, the soft slap of cards, the clink of glasses on the bar.

He pushed through the swinging doors and glanced sharply around. Ace Holmes, with several of his men, was standing at the bar. Milt walked straight toward him. Ace turned with a forced smile.

"Howdy, you old bloodhound," he said genially. "Little drink?"

There was no answering smile on Dawson's face. "No, thanks," he said curtly. "Holmes, if I'd a knew what your business was, you'd of never been in the party that I brought here."

Ace's tone was surly. "What do you mean?"

"I don't like your game——"

"Why, the town needs saloons," Ace protested.

"But it don't need slaughterhouses!" Dawson snapped, and Ace straightened.

"Meaning——"

"Meanin' the rough stuff must stop!" Dawson's voice had a steely edge. "I'm warnin' you, Ace, there'll be no more killin's."

Ace's face took on a defiant sneer. "Since when do I take orders from you?" he drawled. "Your job was finished when you brought us in here. I don't need your advice."

Milt Dawson took one step closer the gambler. "I'm not advisin' you," he said hardly, "I'm tellin' you!"

He turned and started for the door. Ace turned his head and nodded slightly to some one in the back of the room. A gun cracked, and glass shattered as the place was plunged in darkness. Only a strip of moonlight lay under the swinging door. From Ace's position at the bar a flash of fire bored the dark. A man groaned and booted feet walked uncertainly into the strip of moonlight, stumbled and slipped from under the bulk of the man as he fell. A woman screamed, and townspeople rushed from across the street. Already, in the moonlight, the grimace of pain was fading from Milt Dawson's rugged face. Some one struck a match and held it to a wall lamp. In the fitful light, Tom Lewis stared briefly into his friend's face, and glanced up, his eyes blazing.

"Dead!" he gritted. "Shot in the back! Somebody's goin' to pay for this when John gets in to-morrow!"

A DAY'S journey away, John Dawson rode easily at the head of a long wagon train, listening to the music of an improvised quartet in the wagon behind him. He was a young man, but wind and sun had etched lines into his face, and his eyes, squinted against the sun, had a glint of steel that matched the set of his mouth and chin.

A horseman rode up from behind and reined alongside.

"Oought to hit town to-morrow around sun-up, eh, Dawson?" the horseman inquired.

"I'll be right behind you—and no false moves!"

John smiled. "Won't miss it by half an hour, Pat."

"You sure know this country backward," Pat commented.

"That's what I get paid for," John said quietly, and smiled again, his eyes searching the country ahead. "Keep 'em a-rolling along, Pat. I'll go ahead and see how much trouble it's going to be to ford the river."

He spurred ahead and disappeared over the brow of a hill. For a few minutes he rode steadily, down into the little valley, and along the river's edge. Presently he dismounted, examining the stream for a likely place to cross. Suddenly he looked up, listening intently. Drifting into the valley was the unmistakable sound of gunfire, and as he identified it John mounted and whirled with one movement.

As he gained the top of the low range of river hills, he checked his horse for a moment, gazing intently across the prairie. His wagon train was in full flight, the wagons careening madly, the drivers returning the fire of a troop of horsemen which was rapidly overtaking them.

With a gritted curse, John gathered himself, jumped his horse down the embankment where he stood, and set off at full gallop toward the train.

As he rode, he could see the trail jumpers overtake the wagons, bring them to a halt. The drivers climbed down, putting up their arms in answer to the command of the bandit leader. Now he was near enough to hear, to see——

"Guess you know what we're after," said the leader briefly. "Shell out the food an' gold with the outfit."

"Wait a minute, Kit," said a voice sharply, and the bandits whirled around. His horse was breathing hard, but John sat easily, his hands at rest on the pommel of his saddle. "What are you doing?" he inquired mildly, and a look of recognition flashed into Kit Masters' face.

"Hold your guns," he commanded his men in a low tone, and rode out to meet John. They walked their horses slowly away from the astonished group, and Kit slowly put away his gun. In his attitude and speech there was a curious tone of apology:

"I didn't know it was your outfit or I wouldn't have cut down on you," he said sheepishly. "Guess you know that, John."

"So you're still at the old game, eh, Kit?" John said slowly, looking Kit straight in the eye.

The other man glanced away. "We're headin' into the frontier, and ran out of grub," he explained. "Most starved. That's why I jumped this outfit. We gotta have food!"

John shook his head, slowly, definitely, and Kit reached quickly for his money pouch. "I'll pay you well for it, John."

John's glance was hard. "You know I don't deal in your kind of money," he said shortly.

There was a snort from one of Kit's listening men. "Ah, he's yella," he snarled. "Let him have it!"

AS the man reached for his gun, John's hand moved like lightning, and Kit wheeled and shot from the hip, catching his lieutenant in the wrist.

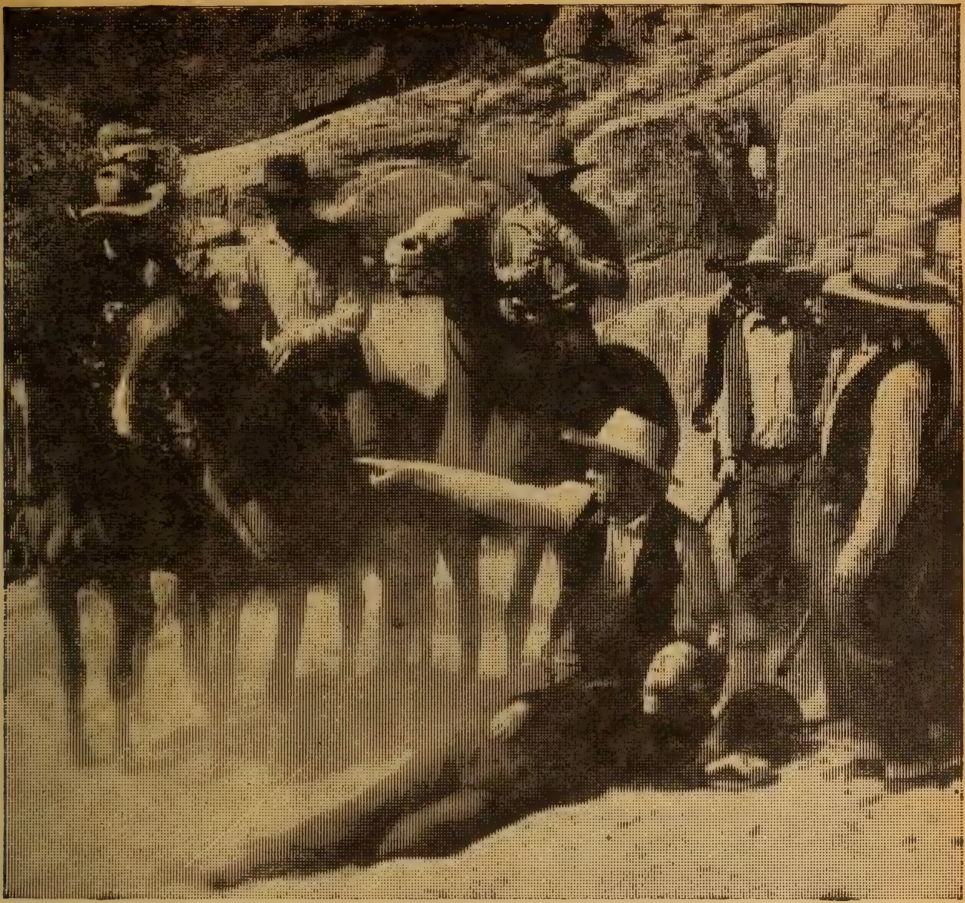
"I said no guns," he barked at the surprised man, "an' I'm a-runnin' this outfit!"

He turned back to John, and smiled ruefully at the gun resting quietly in the scout's big hand.

"Thanks, Kit," John said, "but I outdrew him."

Kit's grin twisted. "Why, you could outdraw him with your eyes closed," he said scornfully. Then he grew serious. "They mean business, John. I tell you, we gotta have food!"

John looked thoughtfully at the desperate faces of the men surrounding him. He glanced over at the huddled group near the wagon train. They looked terrified—and they were his responsibility.



A shower of bullets fairly lifted him from his saddle and flung him headlong.

A little grin flashed across his lips, and he leaned toward Kit.

"You know, Kit," he said in a loud and casual tone, "it's a funny thing. Just before you came along, I'd decided to unload some of my weight, to make a little speed. I'm leaving three hundred pounds of provisions right here, and I'm expecting to find it here on my way back next week with my Dad."

An expression of relief overspread Kit's face. "I getcha," he said.

Without another word, John rode away from him. At the rear wagon, he dismounted, and dropped onto the ground a number of provision boxes.

"Roll 'em away!" he yelled, as he rode back toward the head of the line, and the drivers quickly took their places.

As John rode past Kit, the outlaw looked up. "Thanks—an' you'll find it here on your way out; I'll pay you back with interest."

"So long, Kit," John answered, his voice and look tinged with pity, and cantered up to the head of the train.

When the last wagon had creaked by, Kit glanced up at the bloody wrist and sullen face of his lieutenant.

"You don't know it," he said contemptuously, "but I saved your life by shooting you in the hand. He's faster than I am." He mounted, and sat looking after the disappearing caravan.

"There goes the squarest man I ever met," he said thoughtfully, to no one in particular. "A great friend, and I wouldn't want him for an enemy. No man ever double-crossed him. They like him too well—or they're afraid of him maybe. I never could figure it out, but whatever it is, there ain't two like him. He found me once with a bullet in my back an' a price on my head. Packed me forty miles into town."

"To the Law?" a skeptical voice drawled.

"Naw," said Kit in disgust. "To the doctor. He took care of me till I was well, then fetched me back to where he'd found me an' said there'd been no harm done to th' Law by what he did fer me." He shook his head in puzzlement. "Yuh can't cross a fella like that," he said with conviction and went to pick up the food John had left.

IT was early forenoon of the next day when John led the caravan into the main street of Frontier and held up his hand for the halt. He had already dismounted and was getting two small packages out of his saddle bags when Pat came up to him.

"If you'll drop up to the head wagon, Myers will pay you off," he said.

John looked up with a big smile. "I'll get it later," he said boyishly. "Got a little surprise here for my Dad, an' somebody else." He glanced eagerly around, a little puzzled by not seeing any one he knew. A boy touched his arm.

"Mister Dawson," he said timidly, "Tom Lewis wants to see yuh right away."

John gave a disappointed last look around. "I was just trying to find my Dad," he said. "Got a surprise for him, but I guess it can wait."

He followed the boy down the street to the church.

As they passed the First Chance, a man named Joe laid his hand on Ace Holmes' arm and nodded toward the tall, striding figure. "You know who that is, don't yuh?" he asked the gambler, who was leaning against the porch of the saloon.

"No. Who?" Ace was unconcerned.

"That's Milt Dawson's boy, John," Joe told him slowly and with relish. "I gotta hunch that he'll be askin' questions, Ace, and you better have some answers ready!" Grinning at the gambler's suddenly sobered face, he followed him into the saloon, as John followed the boy into the little church.

John glanced eagerly about, at first unaware of the solemn air that pervaded the place. Hannah came to meet him, and he hugged her joyfully. "This is for you," he cried, bringing out from behind his back one of the two little packages. "And wait till you see what I got here for Dad!"

He turned from her to greet the others, shaking hands with them in great good spirits.

"Got you a nice church here," he told the minister. Then, to Tom Lewis, "Howdy, Mister Lewis, I'm glad to see yuh."

He paused, suddenly struck by the strange silence of all those gathered there. He grinned a little painfully.

"Gosh," he said, "the way you look, a man would think somebody was dead. What's up?" His eyes came back questioningly to Tom Lewis.

Lewis drew a deep breath. "I got some bad news for you, boy."

John's face sobered. "Has something happened to Dad?"

Lewis nodded, finding it hard to go on, but he was forced by the insistent question in the younger man's face.

"He was killed," he said hesitantly, "—shot in the back——"

John stared at him, his face a mask of unbelief. Slowly his gaze checked each of the sober faces about him. Then dark blood swept up into his tense face. "Who did it?" he asked softly.

Ace paused, helplessly covered. "On the bar——" John ordered.

"Don't know. It happened in th' First Chance saloon. We wanted him to be sheriff. He wouldn't, but he went over there to make peace for us."

John Dawson's face seemed to grow older, his shoulders broader, as he stood there. His father, a square white man—dead! "—and he was trying to make peace," John murmured. Suddenly his tense right arm shot out to grip Lewis' shoulder.

"Lewis, I'll be your sheriff!" he cried.

EARLY afternoon sun glinted brightly on the star John Dawson wore, when he walked out of the little church and started down the main street of Frontier. He walked slowly, his hands swinging free, his lithe hips weighted with two guns instead of the accustomed one. His face was cold as bronze and the fire in his eyes was cold too.

Reaching the First Chance, he walked heavily, steadily up onto the porch. With a strong gesture he thrust open the doors and held them wide, his eyes scouring the place. Dead silence fell, and Ace, at his usual place at the bar, looked up. John's eyes held his as he walked slowly to where the gambler stood.

"Am I seeing things?" Ace said with a contemptuous laugh, "or is that a badge?"

Not a muscle of the cold face changed. "At six o'clock to-night you close this place up and it stays closed," John said in a voice like iron.

"What are you talking about?" Ace sneered.

"As sheriff of this town," John told him grimly, "I'm serving you notice. If this place is in operation after six o'clock to-night, I'll arrest you."

"I'm running this place!" Ace shouted. "And I'm running this town." John's voice was a deadly monotone. "Six o'clock is the dead line."

He wheeled and walked swiftly out.

Ace stared after him with dropped jaw. "And I let him get away with that," he murmured in amazement. Anger suffused his face. "If he comes back in here again," he roared, "I'll shoot that star right through him!"

He glowered angrily, and stalked into the back room, beckoning several men after him. In a few minutes he was back again at the bar with a satisfied smile on his face. When Joe, his henchman and manager of the honkytonk down the street, came spluttering in a little later, Ace waved his cigar in a superior manner.

"Calm down," he advised. "I know what you're trying to tell me, but it's a joke. He told you to close down at six o'clock! Forget it, and go back to work—I'll handle him. There'll be no closing."

He and Joe sat down at a table while Joe cooled off.

"Pepper rode in a while ago and told me Norton and his gang are lying low up at Rainbow Falls," Joe said when he had his breath back.

Ace nodded. "I know," he said. "I saw him, too."

"You think it means trouble?"

"Sure it does," Ace grinned, "but not for us. I sent Pepper back to make a deal with Norton for some help."

"What for?"

"To get rid of Dawson and lend us a hand in case we need it."

Joe shook his head. "You're goin' to need it," he prophesied, "because the townspeople are gettin' up in arms. You'll drive 'em away."

"That's what I want to do!" Ace snarled. "Drive 'em out—so I can take over their lands and lease 'em to the newcomers. Then I can run this town to suit myself."

Joe shook his head again. "Ace, cards is your game—not ownin' a town. Yuh better stick to gambling!"

Ace scowled at him scornfully. Then a furtive smile crept into his eyes and he jogged Joe's elbow. An inclination of his head directed the other's gaze toward the street. John Dawson was riding out of town, in the direction of Rainbow Falls.

"Close at six o'clock!" Ace snorted significantly and stalked toward the back of the saloon.

ALMOST as he spoke, eleven horsemen pounded around a corner in the street and brought their mounts to a sliding stop. At their head rode Kit Masters. He glanced around sharply.

"Hi, Smoky," he greeted a man who sidled out of the First Chance and crossed directly to him. "Got the lay of the land?"

"Yeah," Smoky said softly. "It'll be easy. I know where they keep the money and every move they make, just like clockwork. And that ain't all." He lowered his voice still further. "Ace Holmes is runnin' things here."

Kit stiffened. "Ace Holmes, eh?" he said through clenched teeth. "When we go for his gold to-night, I'll square that little debt with him for shooting me in the back!"

"I better get back," Smoky said uneasily. "I'll be lookin' for yuh."

"We'll be there," Kit assured him grimly.

THE grimness in Kit's voice was matched by that in John's face and heart as he galloped along the trail toward Rainbow Falls. In his pocket lay a crumpled note that had come hurtling through the window, tied to a stone, less than an hour before. *"If you want to know who killed your father, come to the head of Rainbow Falls,"* the note read, and John was going without question, though he knew the danger of ambush. He knew, too, that he was going to have his hands more than full when he would return to Frontier at six o'clock.

As he started up the rocky trail toward Rainbow Falls, he looked around carefully. Not a soul was visible. In sight of the narrow pass that led up to the Falls, he pulled his horse to a halt for a thoughtful moment.

He could see that, if a trap was being laid for him, the minute he set foot in that pass he was a goner. The logical place for an ambush was atop the bluff to the north of the pass. He reined off the trail and started to climb the bluff by a circular route. At the top, crouching behind a boulder, a man lay, his eyes glued to the trail below, his gun cocked and ready.

"Howdy!" John said abruptly, and the man jumped and started to turn.

"Don't turn around until you drop that gun!" John said sharply.

The man froze, and let the gun slip slowly from his fingers.

"Now—put your hands in the air."

The man obeyed, and turned cautiously to have a look at his unexpected visitor. Disgust flooded his ugly face as he saw John's empty hands folded quietly on his saddle pommel.

"I thought I was to meet my man at the head of the Falls?" John said pointedly as he dismounted and came close to the man.

"Ah—why—yes," the man stammered nervously, "that's right. They're waitin' for you there."

John eyed him suspiciously. "Looks as though you didn't expect me to get that far," he suggested.

"No—I'm just guardin' the trail," the man assured him.

"I see," John said, and grinned without mirth. "Just to make sure this ain't a trap——"

When they started on up the trail, the outlaw wore John's hat and vest and rode John's horse—ahead.

"I'll be right behind you," John told him gently, "and no false moves!"

White faced, the man mounted and they started forward. As John's double rounded a boulder where the trail was exposed from above, a shower of bullets fairly lifted him from his saddle and flung him headlong on the rocks.

It was a trap, then! Still hidden from his would-be assailants, John smiled grimly, and dismounted, uncoiling his lariat. If he was any guesser, they'd be down the trail like a pack of hounds, and he would not have time to get out of that narrow place. He heard the nearing pound of hoofs. The swinging circle of rope widened about his shoulders; was deftly flung. Before the singing lariat had time to hit the ground where presently horses' feet would be, John snubbed the end of the rope around a jutting rock and leaned against it hard. In the tightening circle four racing steeds stumbled, and four surprised riders hurtled over their horses' necks, to plunge down the rubbly embankment into the lake below.

John wasted no time. There would be others. Even as he gained the saddle of his waiting horse, bullets began to ping against the rock, and he rode hard for the top of the knoll. On the other side—a long, steep cut! Without hesitation, John started down, and the dexterous pony gathered its four feet and slid, with its ears laid back and its eyes bright.

Out of reach of the pursuing bullets now, they gained the plain and streaked for home. John's glance at the sky told him it was getting late.

HE pounded into the Main Street of Frontier, and pulled to a stop in front of the church. Curious groups of townspeople stood about. John dismounted. He glanced at Tom Lewis and Hannah; his glance worried, hers anxious and beseeching.

"What time is it?" he asked, his voice hoarse with dust.

"It's past six," Tom told him.

John settled his belt about his lean hips, loosened both guns in their holsters, and turned his face toward the saloon. Hannah moved forward with a cry, but her father held her. Without a backward glance John started with long strides down the street.

He walked through the doors and stood, his face stern, his hands dangling with dangerous looseness.

As Ace Holmes looked up and caught his eye, John stepped forward.

"It's after six, Ace, and you didn't close. You're under arrest!"

John's voice rang in the suddenly quiet place and Ace Holmes' face grew purple with ugly fury.

"Why, you tin-horn," he bellowed, "you can't arrest anybody!"

John took another step forward.

"I'll trouble you for your guns," he said quietly.

"Sure!" Ace yelled, and dived for his guns. But he might have saved himself the trouble, for John's two big six-shooters suddenly lay in his hands as if they had slid there on greased wires. Ace paused, helplessly covered.

"On the bar——" John ordered, and Ace turned to lay his useless guns on the bar. But as he turned, he winked, and the bartender's hand tightened on a businesslike length of lead pipe.

John was aware of a crushing pain at the back of his head, and fought desperately to keep his eyes in focus as he felt his knees give way beneath him. He heard a scurrying of frightened feet—then he was lost in whirling darkness.

Ace looked down at the crumpled figure, his face contorted with triumphant rage. "I'll show you what I think of you and your badge!" he snarled, and snatched one of the guns from the bar, stooping to bring its muzzle close against John's neck.

A shot popped from the doorway, and Ace yelled with pained astonishment as his cocked gun jumped right out of his hand. He looked up. In the doorway stood Kit Masters, gun leveled, and massed men behind him.

"Stand where you are," he commanded. "Easy like, Ace—you seem to have a habit of gettin' people from in back."

He stepped forward, his eyes steady on Ace, until he stood in front of John's body. He jerked his head. "Get 'im out of here, boys," he ordered, and three of his men gathered up John and went out with him. Kit scooped up Ace's guns, and started backing. In the doorway he paused.

"I came here to settle a personal debt with you, Ace," he announced, "but I've got an idea that John will want to talk with you first, so I'll wait around." He grinned deliberately, and vanished.

As he disappeared, Ace swung into action. "Get all our men in here quick!" he snapped to the man at his elbow. "And send some one out to get the Norton gang."

IN the church, where they had carried John, Kit bent over him, feeling for a heartbeat. His hand encountered the sheriff's star, and he started.

"When did this happen?" he asked in a stunned tone.

Tom Lewis told him. "He became sheriff after they killed his father."

John moved his head painfully, and opened his eyes. Slowly they cleared, and focussed on Kit. He smiled a little.

"Hello," he said. "What are you doin' here?"

Kit grinned back. "Just paying a little interest," he said.

"Thanks," John said briefly, and struggled into a sitting position. "Kit——" he said, holding his head to keep it from flying to pieces. "Kit, you once told me to call on you if I ever needed help. Well, I'm needing it now."

"You name it!" Kit said promptly.

"But it must be my way—on the side of law and order," John stipulated.

Kit frowned. "What do you mean?"

"I'm making you and your men my deputies," John announced surprisingly.

Kit's face held a mixture of emotions. "I never thought I'd be invited to be a Star-packer," he grinned sheepishly, "but here goes!"

They had barely finished pinning stars on the chests of the amazed outlaws, when an excited townsman came running in.

"Dawson," he cried, "Ace is aimin' to clean out th' town! They're comin' for yuh!"

John smiled without mirth. He threw a reassuring glance to Tom Lewis and the minister, and started out the door, followed by Kit and the rest of his deputies.

Silently the small army walked up the twilight street, eyes sharply peering, hands dangling ready.

In front of the saloon, Ace and his men stood, equally silent, watching the avenging march.

Within calling distance, John halted. "Ace," he shouted, "it's a showdown! What's your answer?"

"Here it is!" Ace yelled, and fire streaked the dusk.

Rapidly John and Kit returned the fire as they ducked and dropped into a ditch beside the street. Several of their men were crumpled on the ground, and their own bullets had accounted for some of Ace's crew before it managed to get back into the saloon. Quickly each side established a sort of barricade, and sniping went on steadily.

IN the church, Tom Lewis walked restlessly up and down, hearing vaguely the minister's voice as he read scripture: *"All men being equal in their kind, by water and fire the earth shall be purged of sinners——"* The phrase caught in Lewis' mind, and he halted his back-and-forth march. Then with a gleam in his eye, he slipped out the door into the gathering dusk.

Keeping close to walls, out of range of the popping gunfire, Lewis made his way up the street. Waiting for a lull, he crouched low and ran across to the side where the saloon stood, sliding in between it and the next building. Feverishly he looked over the situation and gathered together a pile of rubbish. A match—a little blaze—— Carefully Lewis nursed the fire against the wooden wall of the saloon, saw it begin to catch, heard the dangerous crackle of dry pine igniting, and straightened up in triumph.

From the roof, a gunman took careful aim at his tall figure, outlined by fire, and Lewis crumpled back to earth with a groan. John, in the nearby ditch, heard his voice and glanced up. He saw the fire and the man on the roof in the same second, and in the next, the man toppled heavily and crashed to the ground, one of John's bullets in his chest.

Gun in hand, John crawled out of the ditch and wormed across the street. Lewis was near the fire, and couldn't be left there. He was badly wounded, too, John saw when he reached him. Without hesitation, he swung his friend over his shoulder and started back across the street. On the porch of the saloon a Holmes man took aim at the bulking target, and John winced as a bullet jolted his left shoulder. But his return shot tumbled the man down the stairs into the blazing alley, and John staggered back into the ditch with the unconscious Lewis.

INSIDE the saloon, Ace became suddenly aware that something was amiss. Acrid wood smoke was filling the room, and his eyes widened as they fell on the wall next the alley. Even while he watched, the wood scorched dark and bulged inward, as flames licked through and turned the whole side of the room into an inferno.

"Clear that side!" he yelled, and no man hesitated in obeying that order.

John and Kit watched jubilantly from the ditch. "They'll be runnin' out like rats in a minute!" Kit gloated, and John called to the men along the ditch:

"Cover every window!"

Steadily they watched, picking off each man who showed himself. But over the sound of their guns and the roar of the flames, they could not hear the pound of horses' feet as Norton's men rode into town.

The newcomers halted a moment to look over the situation—Ace and his men trapped in a furnace, and their assailants—where?

"There they are!" some one discovered suddenly, and Norton yelled:

"Ride 'em down!"

John and Kit and their men, intent on the inferno from which their fire was being steadily returned, turned suddenly at the close sounds of yells and hoofbeats, and had only time to shoot and cower instinctively before the trampling hoofs raced over them!

Back again they came, with the men in the ditch trying helplessly to dodge the fatal, flying feet. This time, Ace and his men realized that help had come.

"We've got 'em in the middle!" he yelled exultantly. "Rush 'em!"

As they rushed for the street, the roaring wooden hell about them collapsed, and frantic screams added to the terror of the fire-scourged night.

Desperately John and his men fought from the shelter of the ditch, harried by gunfire from one side and trampling horsemen from the other. Slowly the roar of guns grew less as the men behind the guns went down. The saloon was a smoking ruin, and the next buildings were blazing fiercely. John's arm hung limp and useless and Kit sprawled half out of the ditch, hardly breathing. Only scattered shots ripped the outraged air.

Suddenly Kit spoke with a cold leer.

"Still shootin' at their backs, eh, Ace?"

Ace Holmes, creeping slowly upon John, shifted his attention for a moment to the prostrate outlaw. Viciously he fired, four times, straight into Kit's body, and the boy took it, his eyes wide open, his mouth twisting into horrible grimaces. As Ace's gun-hammer clicked on an empty chamber, Kit slowly raised his gun, propped one shaking hand with the other, and fired with deadly accuracy, his thin stream of lead tearing into his enemy's chest. Ace pitched forward, his body a sieve, and Kit's grin grew happier.

PAINFULLY John edged along the ditch to where Kit lay. A strange silence lay upon what had been, an hour ago, a town, and was now a smoking horror. Only the crackle of still-burning timbers broke the hush. Occasionally, as the wind shifted the pall of smoke that lay over the place, a star looked down to the bloody ground, and to the little church, standing unharmed.

John laid his hand on Kit's shoulder, and the outlaw roused slightly.

"I guess I've evened up my debts," he whispered. "They always said I'd die with my boots on." He paused, trying to swallow down the rising tightness in his throat. His voice was a rattle. "Do me a favor, will you, John?"

John nodded.

"Take 'em off for me——"

"Sure——" John choked wearily, and tugged them off with his one good hand. He sat with his shoulders hunched, his dirty, bloodstained face propped on a powder-smoked fist and looked out into the smoky dark. Law and order——

The Movie Round-up

THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII

A Radio picture, with Preston Foster, Alan Hale, Dorothy Wilson, John Woods, and Basil Rathbone.

(See the November MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE for the full novelized story of this picture.)

It seems that life two thousand years ago was much the same as it is today. Whether you were called a slave or not, you had to have money to live. Preston Foster, as the mighty peace-loving blacksmith of Pompeii, awoke to this truth when his wife and baby son died because he could not afford a doctor. The film paints a stirring picture of the next twenty years of his life and the trail of blood and banditry he leaves behind him as he climbs to wealth. The battles of the gladiators in the arena—the raids on barbarian villages for slaves—the wholesale slaughter of Christian martyrs by fierce Briton savages—these things are stirring in themselves, and yet are just a prelude to the magnificent and horrible spectacle of a whole city fleeing terror-stricken from the destruction of a flaming Vesuvius. The screams of the trapped humans as they are swallowed by the earth or pushed into the boiling sea will echo in your ears for a long time.

A SPECTACLE BEYOND YOUR WILDEST DREAMS! A GRIPPING, CHILLING MASTERPIECE!

THUNDER MOUNTAIN

A Fox picture, with George O'Brien, Barbara Fritchie, and Frances Grant.

George O'Brien and his pal, Dean Benton, stake a claim on a new gold mine. Morgan Wallace jumps the claim, and steals the proof of claim papers from Benton as he is riding to file them. Later, Benton is killed before he can testify in Miner's court and O'Brien warns Wallace to get out of town before he avenges his partner's death. He gets his mine back in time, but not without violence and bloodshed.

DID YOU EVER SEE ANY ONE RIDE LIKE THIS O'BRIEN MAN? A SWELL ACTOR, A GOOD SCRAPPER, A GREAT HORSEMAN!

Continued on page 49

REELS of THRILLS

A newsreel cameraman's life is plenty thrilling—and this is why.

ABOUT ten years ago, it seemed to Webber Hall, 19-year-old sandy-haired tornado that he was, that there weren't enough exciting things happening in Memphis. Life was tough enough when it was exciting, but when it was boring—gosh!

So he hopped on a train and came to New York.

The big city, in 1926, was even deader than Memphis, and Webber was almost on his way back when he happened to pass a camera store. There in the window was a moving-picture camera with a price tag saying "$2,250.00" hanging from its expensive lens. Young Hall strode boldly into the store and demanded to know more about the exhibit in the window.

A bewildered camera salesman, a short time later, saw his not overly-prosperous looking customer walk out of the store with the $2,250 camera. Webber had argued until he got it for a down payment of fifteen dollars, the balance to be paid "in convenient installments"!

His next stop was at the main office of one of the principal newsreel companies. "Gentlemen," he told them, "I have here one of the most expensive cameras made. I have just bought it for myself. I want to use it, and I want you to pay me for using it. In short, gentlemen, I want you to give me a job making your newsreels. How about it?"

And that's the way one of the world's ace newsreel cameramen crashed his first assignment!

Today, Webber Hall is Southern Assignment Editor and Chief Cameraman for Fox Movietone News, working out of his old home town of Memphis and covering everything in the way of exciting pictorial news in the southern part of the country. If you don't think that a man with titles like his can be kept busy, suppose you review his activities for a week a short time ago.

AT two in the morning, Labor Day, September 2, 1935, "Web" was rudely awakened by the jangling of a telephone bell. Answering, he heard a faint voice shouting:

"Hello, Webber, this is Dan Daugherty in New York. Put on your pants and get down to Miami in a hurry! There's a ship on the rocks—the *Dixie*—and a hell of a hurricane blowing! Get everything you can, and stand by for further orders!"

Half an hour later, Web had located a sleepy aviator who didn't seem to care particularly when he was to be killed—then, or later. For a certain sum, the airman agreed to fly the cameraman as close to Miami as their luck and his old crate would take them. They piled in and took off into the murky blackness.

Hall admits that he doesn't know what happened for a while after their take-off. "I tried to catch some of the sleep I was missing," he drawled, "but it was just about the same as trying to doze off on a roller coaster! It was too dark to tell where we were at any time, and only the pilot knew how much altitude we had. That's providing, of course, that his altimeter was working. Now that I look back on it, I'm not too sure about it."

Along about the time that he figured the dawn should be breaking, Webber was becoming used to his jouncing. It was then that a giant, unseen hand reached from the heavens and slapped the plane sideways, almost tearing off its antiquated wings! He felt—rather than heard—the pilot shouting at him, trying to get his attention. The aviator was pointing toward the ground, asking his permission to land.

"I was just about to be hard-boiled about it," Hall admitted. "I know how tough it is to pilot an old crate through a mild storm, let alone the beginnings of a hurricane, but, gosh, I didn't have to do the work. I was all set to tell him to ride it out when another hunk of wind almost tore our propeller off! I changed my mind in a hurry!"

On the ground once more, Hall didn't wait for daylight. He scouted around until he found a house, roused the owner from a comfortable bed, and offered him twenty dollars cash in advance to get him to the nearest big town in a hurry.

The town happened to be Tampa. Webber took out time enough to report by phone to New York, drink a cup of black coffee, and buy a ticket on the first train to Miami. Then, figuring that he could beat the train time if he drove, he sold his ticket back to the railroad company, hired a taxi for a 250-mile dash, and set out on the last leg of his trip to Miami.

Freeman of Universal Newsreel in the thick of action in the recent war between Japan and China.

THEY told him at the airport in Miami that no plane would be allowed to take off until the storm let up. He couldn't rent a boat to take him out to the stricken liner for any amount. Stumped for the moment, his fast-paced mind started thinking ahead to the future.

He was one man, alone, sent to cover a vast assignment. He had to cover a shipwreck from every conceivable angle. Aboard the *Dixie,* some one—maybe several people—would have made amateur movies of stirring scenes. He would have to buy them. The survivors—if there were to be any—would be taken aboard several different rescue ships. He would have to interview and photograph some from each group. He would need aerial shots and shots from rescue ships, featuring the *Dixie,* the storm, and the lifeboats as they crossed the treacherous waters.

He alone was responsible for the accomplishment of all these things, and he realized, now that he had time to reason them out, that it would be an impossible task for one man. He set about to collect a crew.

He picked up two free-lance cameramen with whom he had worked on big assignments before and who happened to be in Miami at the time. He supplied them with liberal expense money and told them what he expected of them.

Then there was a girl Web knew. She was recruited to buy up all film shot by passengers showing the storm, the wreck, and all other subjects pertaining to the catastrophe. Buy regardless of price, but get it all! And, most important, get it before any of the rival newsreel companies beat her to it!

This done, Webber Hall resigned himself to making life miserable for one and all at the Miami airport. They still talk about "that pest, that newsreel guy!" As the precious hours slid by, he made his demands for a plane more and more insistent until, at last and—so we are told—in self-defense, they agreed to let one plane up.

It was a closed cabin job, and in order to get a "set-up" for his camera, Web was forced to lash the door to the cabin open. He placed his camera so that the lens pointed through the generous opening, and then tied his safety belt to one of the interior fixtures. With nothing but a worn piece of rope to keep him from hurtling through the open doorway of the plane, Webber Hall took off to photograph one of the most dangerous assignments in his career!

He swears that, in circling the stranded liner, they flew so close to the boiling seas that spray whipped in through the open doorway. Skimming over the mountainous waves, they shot an adequate amount of film and even dropped words of encouragement in hastily scribbled notes onto the deck of the *Dixie,* itself!

That task completed, the pilot turned to Webber for further orders. Should he turn back to Miami?

Most decidedly he should not, was Webber's emphatic reply. He disengaged himself from his belt, moved his camera to comparative safety, and then ordered the pilot to fly on south, directly into the storm that was still raging!

Before taking off, Webber had heard rumors of death and destruction among the Florida keys. If there was any more story to be photographed, he was going to shoot it at once!

SOMEWHERE just north of the Keys, by the kindness of the special Providence that watches over newsreel cameramen, they were able to make a landing despite the terrific gale. Once more dismissing his plane with instructions to get the shots of the *Dixie* to New York City as fast as they could be flown, he set out alone to record the gruesomeness and horror of the new disaster.

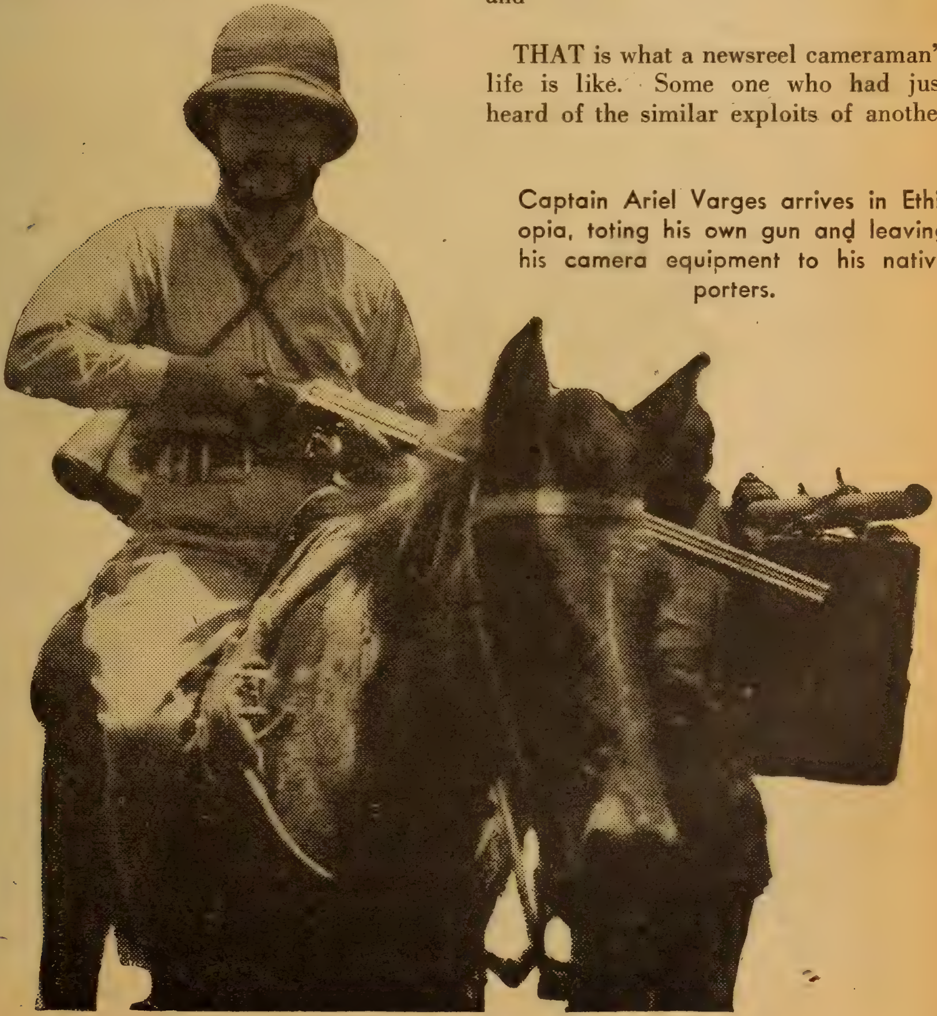
For days, drifting from place to place with relief trains, striking out on foot, commandeering automobiles whenever it was possible, Webber Hall covered every mile of the trail of wreckage, making hundreds of shots. Frequently, completing a shot of a demolished building, he would abandon his camera to help the rescuers release imprisoned bodies. More than once, he bent over dying men and tried as best he could to ease their mortal pains.

Finally, weary and half sick from the horror he had seen, he knew that his job had been done. He turned back, once more, toward Miami, arriving there early on Sunday afternoon. It took him a while to contact the crew he had left behind him, but in each instance he was assured that the jobs he had assigned had been well done. With relief in his heart, he sent a wire to his New York office. Then he checked into a hotel and dropped, exhausted, on his bed to make up for his sleepless nights.

Exactly forty minutes later, he was awakened by his telephone bell. Wearily he brought the receiver to his ear and heard a faint voice shouting:

"Hello, Webber. Dan Daugherty in New York calling. Put on your pants and get over to Baton Rouge as fast as you can! Huey Long's just been shot and——"

THAT is what a newsreel cameraman's life is like. Some one who had just heard of the similar exploits of another



Captain Ariel Varges arrives in Ethiopia, toting his own gun and leaving his camera equipment to his native porters.

camera ace shook his head slowly and murmured, "So *that's* what's become of all the old-fashioned reporters!"

Scattered over the face of the world there are almost five thousand men who are ready, at the drop of a hat, to record imperishably the eruption of a volcano, to interview a mighty figure in world affairs, or to shoot scenes of a cat mothering a brood of chickens. It's all in the day's work.

After a newsreel man has proved his worth, he is occasionally allowed to work on his own initiative. This usually develops through his being assigned to some remote spot where he will know of important news breaks before his superiors. There is Captain Ariel Varges, for instance.

Varges calls himself "the luckiest man in the world." It will give you an idea as to what a newsreel cameraman calls "luck" to know that Varges' claim is based on his having happened to be on the scene of five major earthquakes or volcanic eruptions *while the holocausts were actually occurring!*

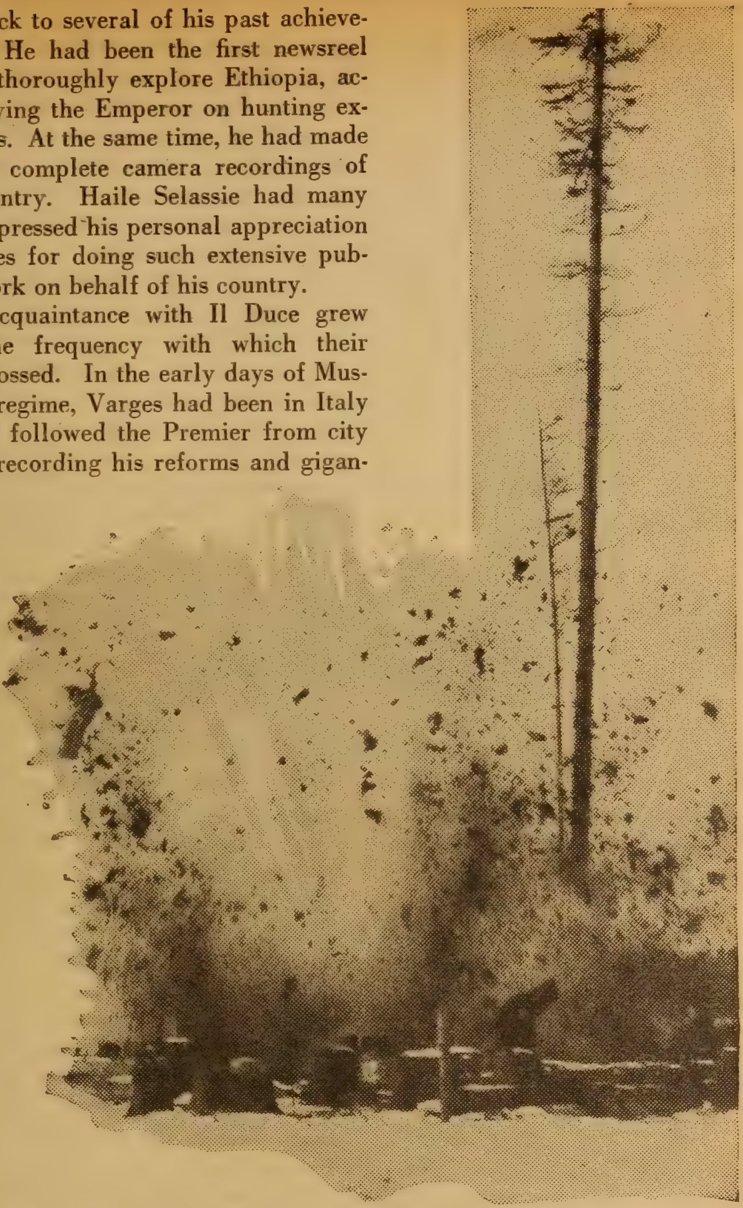
When the first rumblings of war in Ethiopia were heard, most newsreel companies were puzzled as to how to cover the situation adequately. Not Varges' company, however! They well knew, from past experience, that the "Lucky" Varges addressed the Emperor of Abyssinia by his first name, that he knew every foot of ground on which the war would be fought from having traveled and hunted over it so frequently, and that his personal friendship with Benito Mussolini would give him free rein on the other side of the lines as well!

To the ordinary man, this would seem incredible. But to Varges—"Pooh. Luck, that's all." His luck in this instance

Webber Hall catches thrills while they happen—like this!

dates back to several of his past achievements. He had been the first newsreel man to thoroughly explore Ethiopia, accompanying the Emperor on hunting expeditions. At the same time, he had made the first complete camera recordings of that country. Haile Selassie had many times expressed his personal appreciation to Varges for doing such extensive publicity work on behalf of his country.

His acquaintance with Il Duce grew from the frequency with which their paths crossed. In the early days of Mussolini's regime, Varges had been in Italy and had followed the Premier from city to city, recording his reforms and gigantic improvements on film for the world to see. Before long, Mussolini became accustomed to having Varges in his retinue and even asked for him on the few occasions when he happened to be busy elsewhere while Il Duce was performing some super-human task.



Then, in addition to his personal connections on both sides of the controversy and his familiarity with the disputed ground, Varges also won fame for himself with the way in which he handled the recent war between Japan and China. At the constant risk of his life, Varges skipped from one side to the other, never missing an important troop movement, catching every stirring action.

Frequently, caught between the two

lines as a fresh battle broke, Varges would calmly set up his tripod and film the action with shot and shell flying all about him from both sides!

It was only natural that Varges should cover the Ethiopian struggle. No one in his company considered any other possibility for the assignment. They merely waited until they received a cablegram from Addis Ababa signed "Varges." Then they released large advertisements, featuring the intrepid news photographer arriving in Ethiopia with his usual caravan and trail of native servants and helpers. Topping the ads, in bold letters, they announced, "Okay, boys, you can start the war now! Varges is in Ethiopia!"

That's how they feel about Varges.

It isn't surprising that they have such confidence in him. Photographing a war is a specialized job, and it calls for experienced men. There haven't been enough wars to go around since the sudden rise of newsreels to a place of international importance. The few campaigns that have been waged have been covered, so the newsreel companies say, by those who were "lucky enough" to be on the spot at the time, as Varges was. By the time cameramen could be rushed into the zone of action from the outer world, the war was usually over.

ANOTHER man who ranks with Varges in his ability to be on the spot, know the leaders on both sides, and come out of the thickest of the fray without a scratch is Universal's Dave Oliver. Dave, if you should ask him, would casually admit that he "happened to be" in Havana when the people repaid President Machado's tyranny with unprecedented violence. He wouldn't put it just that way. He'd probably refer to the series of revolutions as "that scrap in Cuba" and let it go at that. With a little pressure, you might be able to get him to confess that he "shot a couple of scenes."

The fact is that, several times during the outbursts, Dave Oliver was placed under arrest for making permanent records of the bloodshed—records which those in power knew would be embarrassing later. Once, he was actually sentenced to be shot, and his life was saved only by the direct intervention of President Roosevelt himself!

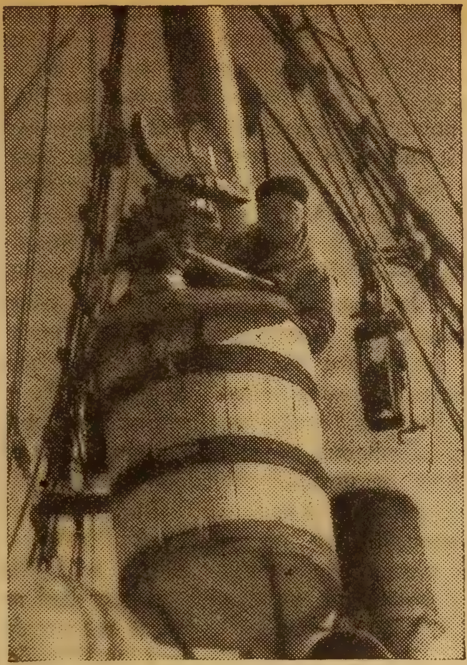
This happened in the early stages of the revolt, when Dave was the only newsreel cameraman on the island of Cuba. President Machado's terroristic secret police, the dreaded PORRA, were trying desperately to suppress all radical groups. Things had developed to the point where almost every Cuban was plotting the overthrow of his government. Any group of three or more men, standing together on the streets, became a meeting of revolutionaries!

The PORRA's solution to this situation was to tour the city in large dark sedans. Whenever a knot of men was spotted, machine guns pointed from the car windows! Death belched from their black mouths! Men dropped, writhing, to the ground! Spectators fled to safety, fearing to help the victims of this reign of terror!

Dave Oliver, knowing of this procedure, made contacts with leaders of the dissatisfied Cubans. When he would hear of a secret meeting, he would speed to the spot and hide in a doorway, his camera ready for action. As the PORRA death car would sweep by, spreading its rain of death, he would leap into the open, photograph the scene, and dodge back to cover.

Machado, hearing that this daring American was not only photographing his assassinations but was actually managing to smuggle his film into America, issued orders for Oliver's capture "dead or alive, preferably dead"! Dave knew of this, and he took precautions to see that there was always a means of escape for him after one of these slaughters. But once he failed to see a squad of infantry soldiers, so engrossed was he in the carnage he was filming! A rifle butt swung through the air, crashing on Oliver's head without warning! When he came to, several hours later, he was in a filthy prison cell.

By bribing his guard, he managed to send word of his plight to his New York office and they, in turn, wired President Franklin D. Roosevelt. He promptly communicated with Ambassador Welles in Cuba, instructing him to arrange for the immediate release of the American cameraman.



Here's the set-up you need for whaling pictures.

Now the situation was so acute that it called for the personal attention of the Cuban Secretary of War Ferrara. He visited Dave in his cell, his huge bulk almost completely filling the tiny space. He was very solemn.

"They were going to have you killed," he said. "You have done Cuba a great disservice. You were sentenced to be shot to-morrow morning."

Dave repressed an urge to ask about his trial. He realized that Ferrara was in no mood for small talk, and that his being doomed to death without a trial seemed only natural to a Cuban high official.

"I appreciate your kindness in interceding on my behalf," Oliver replied in his most formal manner.

Ferrara bowed slightly. "You will be released when you give us your camera and promise not to take any more pictures."

Dave Oliver bowed, too. "Naturally," he said, "I would do almost anything to be free once more. However, the camera is my own personal property. It cost me much money. I would be without a trade if I were without my camera."

This seemed only logical to the giant Ferrara. "But," he added significantly, "your promise?"

"I promise," Dave swore solemnly, "to take no more pictures while I am in Cuba—unless something important happens."

"Important?"

Dave shrugged his shoulders. "These shootings I have been filming—who can think that *they* are important?"

He says that he could feel Ferrara's eyes suddenly bore through him. He wondered for the moment whether he had carried his irony too far. Then, with a wave of relief, he saw the huge Cuban turn to the jailer.

"Release the prisoner," he ordered.

Ten whole minutes passed before Dave saw anything "important" enough to cause him to break his parole. It was another car full of Porristas, vomiting hot lead into the bodies of defenseless Cuban citizens——

"WHAT do I have to do to become a newsreel cameraman?" is a question which the companies who supply the world with visualized news must answer hundreds of times every week.

Their answer is never very enlightening to their questioners, for the simple reason that there is nothing any one can do to win a camera assignment. Newsreel cameramen become newsreel cameramen automatically, it seems. It is very much as Sidney Drew, the great actor, once replied to a young man who asked him how he might get on the stage.

Drew looked at him scornfully. "If I must tell you how to become an actor, you had best turn to banking. Actors do not become actors. Actors *are* actors!"

So it is with newsreel cameramen. They are cameramen because it is natural that they should be. Each one has his different story of how he crashed the well-nigh inaccessible gates of Newsreeldom. However, a general study of all the leading camera aces shows several factors which are so common that they must have had great bearing on their success.

Most of them have been newspaper men at some time or other, either as reporters or news photographers. This has given them a sense of news values that is vitally important.

To this newspaper background might also be traced their general resourcefulness. Quickness of thought is necessary in so many situations. It might be a question of from what spot the best pictures might be taken, or it might be a problem of how to persuade some disinterested—or even antagonistic—celebrity to pose. Whatever its nature is, there is always a fly in the cameraman's ointment somewhere on each assignment. They have long since learned that news does not wait to be photographed and so their decisions must be instantaneous and always to their advantage.

Also, most cameramen knew how to operate a camera before they received their first assignments. Many of them were expert amateur or professional photographers to start with, knowing far more than just the necessary points about lighting, time of exposure, focusing and the other essentials of good camera work.

But, above all, regardless of whether he had previously worked on a newspaper, regardless of whether or not he had ever had an opportunity to display great resourcefulness, regardless of his previous knowledge of camera technique, the newsreel photographer must have proved—especially to himself—that he has cool and steady nerves and fears nothing in this world or any other.

It is this fearlessness, the newsreel executives say, that makes them such a tough bunch to handle every once in a while. No matter how loud their bosses yell at them, newsreel cameramen never fail to yell back. And, most usually, a lot louder!

CAMERA THRILLS

A Universal Picture, with a cast of thousands, narrated by Graham MacNamee.

This is a composite film, running perhaps fifteen minutes, made up of the most thrilling newsreel shots imaginable. Many of the incidents referred to in the preceding story are shown here. There is more violence, more action, more thrill to this one short subject than ever before packed into any longer work. You may not find CAMERA THRILLS billed at your local theatres, but keep your eyes open for it. It's worth it!

Death and destruction! Mad violence and riot! A short sensation you'll never forget!

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 39

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

A Warner Brothers picture with James Cagney, Mickey Rooney, Joe E. Brown, Frank McHugh, Hugh Herbert, and many other stars.

As the lights went up, we heard a voice behind us saying, "I never knew Shakespeare was like this!" The fact is, Shakespeare never *was* "like this"! It is only the brilliance of the production by Max Reinhardt, and the superlative work by Hollywood's ablest cast which makes you think that the greatest of all playwrights wrote his comedy scenes especially for actors who were to be born 300 years later. They couldn't have fitted better if the Bard had been present to supervise them!

THERE WILL SOON COME A TIME WHEN YOU WILL BE ASHAMED TO ADMIT YOU HAVE NOT SEEN "A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"! THERE WILL NEVER BE A TIME WHEN YOU WON'T ENJOY IT!

THE GREAT IMPERSONATION

A Universal picture, with Edmund Lowe, Henry Mollison, Valerie Hobson, and Lumsden Hare.

Back in 1914, two men in Africa bore remarkable resemblance to each other. One was an English nobleman. The other was the agent of powerful munitions interests. The agent plans to kill the Englishman and to take his place in London's diplomatic circles. What follows develops into one of the most interesting and intriguing spy stories ever filmed.

THEY'VE DONE RIGHT BY E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM'S GREATEST SPY STORY. IT IS TENSE, DRAMATIC, AND FAST MOVING.

TARZAN ESCAPES

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, with Johnny Weissmuller, John Buckler, and Maureen O'Sullivan.

Here's another of the Edgar Rice Burroughs tales about the man who was brought up to swing through the trees rather than walk on the ground. Full of action, it makes swell entertainment, proving that truth may be stranger than fiction, but it is not always as much fun.

LET'S HAVE MORE OF THESE "TARZAN" PICTURES!

Continued on page 63

The Rainmakers

They said they could make anything from a drizzle to a cloudburst––but they were the only ones that were all wet!

ROSCOE was roaring out of Goober County, Kansas. So were a swirling, blinding dust storm, seventeen delicately aimed rocks, and three musket loads of buckshot. But it wasn't the dust, nor the rocks, nor the gunshot, that bothered Roscoe as he drove along. He just couldn't keep his cigar lighted.

Of course there were other little things. He had a windswept radiator—the wind having swept it all the way off the car. Then there was the problem of dodging flying rocking-chairs, zooming contented cows, and soaring four-poster beds. Still, all this was as peaceful as a seven-day bike race compared with the group of Goobernatives Roscoe had left in the last town. He pressed on, losing a fender here and a windshield there.

Roscoe had a past. He hadn't driven a mile before it caught up with him. It crashed in through the rear window, bounced sharply off his head and onto the seat beside him. He cleared his head, readjusted his cigar. Then curiosity got the better of him. He looked around to see what had happened.

The whole story lay there alongside of

him on the seat. It was part of a sign board which read: "Goober County Welcomes Roscoe The Rainmaker. He will bring rain to our drouth-stricken community on Saturday, August 15th."

Roscoe smiled weakly, stepped further down on the accelerator, and hoped that the carburetor was still there.

Bouncing restlessly in the back seat was Roscoe's sole companion, his dearest friend, his daily bread, and his weekly bath—his rain-making machine. It was a contraption which looked like a cross between a pipe organ and a windmill. All in all, it would have staggered the genius of Rube Goldberg and put him to shame.

The control board of the machine showed four dials marked respectively as: DRIZZLE — SHOWER — HEAVY RAIN—CLOUDBURST. And therein was the root of all Roscoe's troubles; there was no exhaust control. This would have been of small consequence except that back in Goober County, with all the Goobers great and small, joyfully awaiting his cloudburst, his machine backfired and blew up a dust storm.

IN the distance Roscoe could see what looked like a farm house. At least it was the only thing in sight that wasn't moving. Since it wasn't moving, Roscoe moved to it. After manipulating a narrow escape at the hands of a flying encyclopedia, he pulled on the brake in front of the farm house. Grabbing his contraption, he jumped out of the car and rushed up to the door, only momentarily annoyed at finding the brake lever still in his left hand.

Several knocks brought no response, so he pushed the door open and walked in.

"Ho there, friend!" he shouted.

Evidently his friend didn't hear him, for there was no answer. Suddenly something touched him in the back. He wheeled around, extended his hand, but there was no one there. Looking down, however, Roscoe saw a frightened young farmer peering up out of a trapdoor.

"Hey! What have you got down there?" Roscoe always was a great question asker.

"A cyclone cellar," was the reply. "C'mon down."

"No thanks, son. I've got a good cyclone up here."

Noticing, out of the corner of his eye, that a recent whoop of wind and sand had torn away the back bedroom, Roscoe changed his mind and went down the ladder, banging the trapdoor after him.

"Well," mused Roscoe as he looked around, "this is a nice cozy little grave to be in, in a storm."

"It'll do until it blows over," answered the young farmer.

"Blows over?" Roscoe's cigar was strangling him. "Is this place likely to go too?"

"Oh no, we're safe here. Anyway, the dust storm'll soon be over. It's going to start raining in a few minutes."

"Yeah, what gave you that idea, son?"

A novelized
version of
the Radio
Picture of
the same
title.

THE CAST

ROBERT WOOLSEY..................as Roscoe
BERT WHEELER....................as Billy
DOROTHY LEE..................as Margie Spencer
Fredric Roland.................as Henry Spencer
Berton Churchill...............as Simon Parker

Original Story by Albert Treynor and Fred Guiol
Screenplay by Grant Garrett and Les Goodwins
Produced by Lee Marcus
Directed by Fred Guiol
Music by Louis Alter and Jack Scholl

RKO
Radio
PICTURES

"Didn't you hear? Roscoe the rainmaker is over at the fair grounds with his machine right now."

This was a proud moment for Roscoe, but he confessed. "That can't be possible, son. I'm Roscoe and this is the machine."

"You're Roscoe? Gee, I thought you were going to make it rain over there."

"I thought so too." At last, some one was forcing Roscoe to take down his hair. However, he continued. "But something went wrong with the machine, and they ran me out of town."

"Gosh, that's too bad."

"Yes. Too bad for them. By the way, son, what's your name?"

"Billy."

"Well, Bill, let's you and me peep out of this trapdoor, and see how much dust has gathered on the old accordion."

They climbed up the ladder and cautiously pushed open the door. They got nothing for their labors but an eye full of dust; in fact, two eyes full. So the door banged shut again. During their brief stay in the cyclone cellar a minor tragedy had occurred upstairs. The house blew away!

Back in the cyclone cellar Roscoe and Billy were crying in their beer. In other words, they were trying to beer up under it all. Roscoe was deep in remorse from failure. Billy was in an even more desperate situation. He wanted a drink of water, but all he got from the pump was a glass full of dust. They rested on their elbows for the next hour and a half in silence and meditation.

Suddenly Roscoe rose to his feet and began to pace. Up and down. Up and down. Then he sat down again—he couldn't stand the pace. At this point Billy ventured a meek question. "What are you going to do from now on, Mister Roscoe?"

Roscoe was still in despair—dis pair of shoes, dis pair of socks, and dis pair of pants—so his answer was rather gloomy. "I don't know. I'm disgusted. Right now my machine and I are due in California for a job. But I don't think I'll go."

"Gosh, don't say that, Mister Roscoe!" Billy pleaded. "Maybe they're waiting for you out there in California. They'll be awful disappointed."

Roscoe moved over to the other side of his cigar and replied thoughtfully, "Oh, I don't know——"

"Yes, sir," Billy continued. "They probably need you right away. Besides, it's too late to do any good here."

The rainmaker paused momentarily to poll his brain and then shouted rather triumphantly, "I'll do it! California, here I come!" With that he tucked his contraption under his arm and started for the ladder. He stopped short and turned to Billy. "What are *you* going to do?"

Billy, somewhat dejected, was digging his toes into the ground as he responded. "Oh, I don't know. I guess I'll go out and try to find my house."

"Say, I need an assistant," Roscoe announced quickly. "Do you know anything about machinery?"

Billy's face brightened up like a gold front tooth. "Oh, sure! I know all about tractors and plows and things like——"

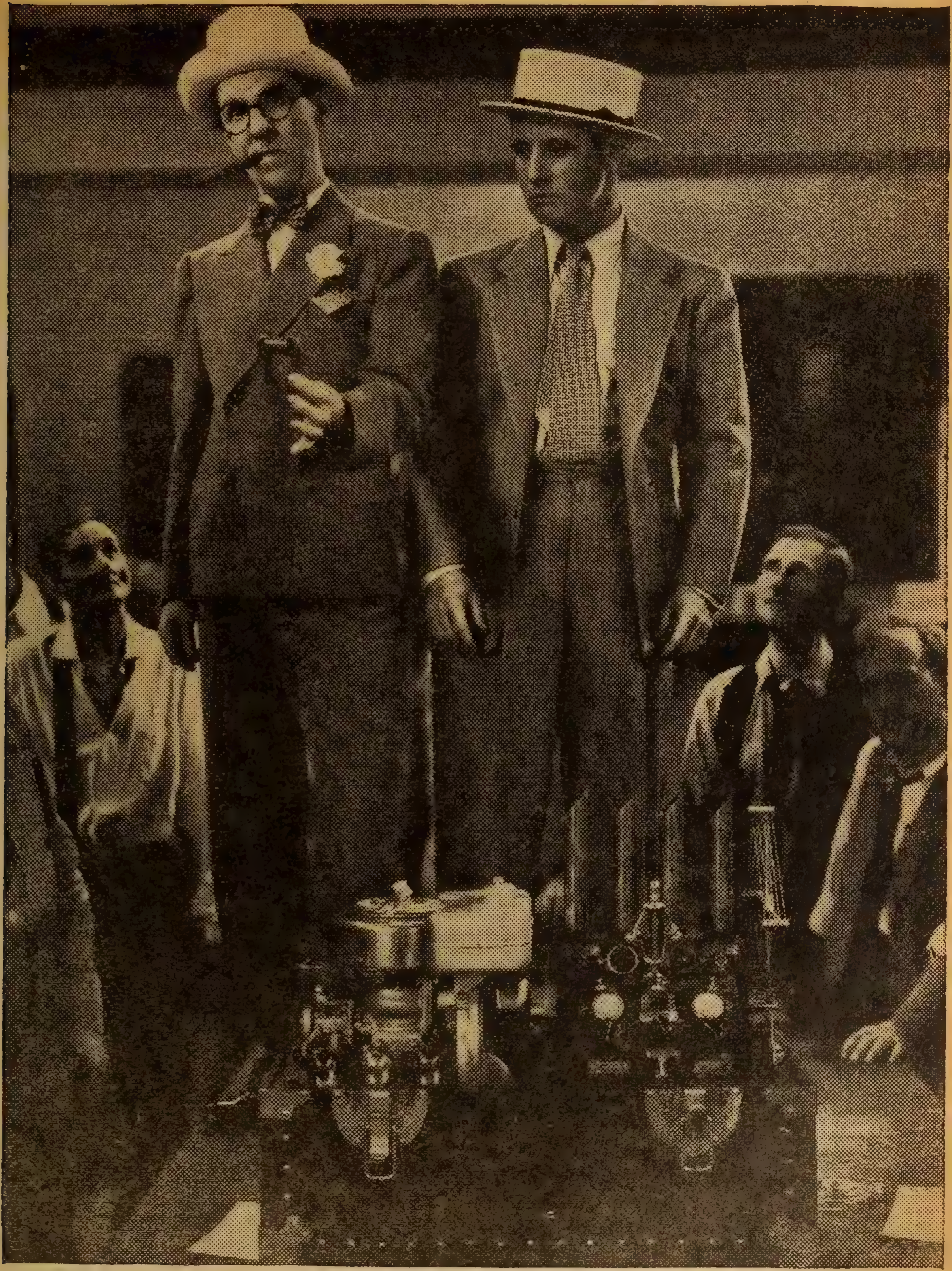
"Good!" Roscoe cut in. "Then I'll be *your* assistant."

"You mean you'll take me to California with you?"

"Sure! What can I lose? Besides, you might find your house out there."

THE weather report said "Fair and warmer" for Lima Junction and vicinity. The neighbors knew it was *warmer*, but they didn't think it was *fair*. "All's fair in love and war." They knew that. However, they had no war, and, for that matter, little love either—for theirs was the lima bean industry.

You can't fight a lima bean, and you can't make love to it either. At least, the Lima Junctionites never did. They didn't



Roscoe showed them a magnet. "This, gentlemen, is the machine's nerve center."

want "love and war" nor "fair and warmer"—they wanted RAIN.

Not too much. Just a nice gentle seven-day cloudburst would satisfy them. In fact, they would have welcomed something like the Johnstown flood down in their little Southern California valley.

Rain hadn't come to Lima Junction

The two engines came nose to nose. Billy climbed aboard Roscoe's cow-catcher.

for two months. Nothing had come to Lima Junction—not even a chain letter. The bean farmers were alarmed. Without rain the little limas (beans, not children) wouldn't grow up to be big limas. This, in itself, would be disastrous, because the California bean growers, like their fellow olive growers, classified their product, in their own modest little way, as: large, larger, mammoth, giant, jumbo, colossal, and super-colossal. No rain—no super-colossal.

NOW Lima Junction farmers were assembled in one of Simon Parker's bean fields to cuss and discuss their "unwatery grave." Of course business was just as bad with the umbrella people, but these farmers didn't grow umbrellas, so they didn't care.

Simon Parker, the richest and most successful of all the Lima Junction farmers, was in the center of the group, sitting on the handle of a plow. He could be distinguished from the jackass in front of the plow by his white linen suit and the polka dot necktie. The others were banked around him like a floral display at a gangster funeral. Not only that but they looked like they were at a funeral.

"I tell you, Parker," jabbered one of the farmers, "we've got to get water! If we don't, I'm ruined!"

"You mean we're all ruined," added a super-colossal grower.

"I know it, boys," agreed Parker hopelessly, "but what can we do? Look out there. My own twenty-five hundred acres of beans withering up under the hot sun."

"Mister Parker," broke in a humble little man who only grew giant beans, "Mister Parker, somebody was telling me the other day about an idea you had for bringing in water."

This was just the crack Parker wanted one of them to make. As they all looked hopefully toward him, Parker pawed at the ground, and with a forced nonchalance replied, "Oh, it was just an idea. —I—a—thought maybe we might build a flume to bring the water down from Willow Lake."

"That'd cost a lot of money, wouldn't it?" some one asked.

"Well, yes it would," Parker answered, pretending to think. "I have the figures here somewhere." He drew a paper from his pocket which contained an estimate for the flume at $32,000, which had been drawn up by the Union Construction Company.

"Yes—here—here we are," blustered Parker. "A little over fifty thousand dollars would build it. Now if we could each put in, say, five thousand apiece——"

The reaction of the beanmen, from mammoth through super-colossal, was that they didn't have the five thousand dollars. In fact, they didn't have anything but a bunch of dried-up bean stocks. Also, they had already borrowed their limit from the bank. The bank was suffering from a lot of dried-up stocks, too—not bean stocks either.

Parker knew that was the situation, so he set out to make the most of it. After another half hour of Parker dramatizing himself as the wolf in sheep's clothing, Sir Galahad, Dizzy Dean, and Joan of Arc, it was decided that he would pay for the building of the flume. The beansters, in turn, would buy water from him until their portion of the project had been accounted for in cash. However, they couldn't pay for the water until the beans had become at least colossal and had been harvested. Parker understood that. "But," he told them, "if I invest that much money, I must have some security. Say, a note, or a lien on your property."

This caused the farmers to pause and rub the stubble on their respective chins. Noting their hesitancy, Parker assured them, "Just a matter of business, gentlemen. Just a matter of business."

In the end, with a Parker promise that the water would be down in time to save their crops, the Lima Junction lima bean growers, alas and alack, agreed to the plan. That done, they began to scatter back over the fields to their homes. Parker said good-by to them all. He really meant good-by—good-by to their farms. Then, with a scheming look of gratification on his face, Parker went over, got in his car and started for the bank.

HENRY SPENCER was president of the Lima Junction Bank. He was the fellow with the dried-up stock, the farmer's friend, his wife's husband, and incidentally the father of Margie, the belle of the town. Lima Junction had two other belles—the fire belle and the school belle. But they were not for Henry. He was too old to be a fireman, and he disliked school teachers.

From his office Spencer could see Margie behind the teller's window waiting on customers. And from what he saw it looked as though she was going to have a long wait. Rising from his desk, Spencer walked over to his daughter.

"Well, Margie, we certainly need a few new customers."

"I'll say," Margie replied, looking up at her father, "but say, Dad, you look worried. What's the matter?"

"Margie, darling," Spencer began, "we've loaned a great deal of money to help these farmers—too much, in fact, for the good of the bank. Of course, if all our accounts were as large as Parker's, it would be a different story. But these poor farmers have drawn out all their savings and borrowed besides."

"I know," Margie interrupted. "I wish we could collect some of those notes."

"Can't expect to collect them when the farmers haven't got any money, Margie. If they get rain in time to save their crops, they'll be all right."

"And if they don't——" Margie was alarmed.

Spencer didn't want to answer Margie's question, and he was relieved when he saw Simon Parker, the blustering billygoat, bust into the bank. He started toward him, saying, "Good afternoon."

"Good and hot," Parker shot back as he mopped his brow. "Let's go into your office, Spencer. I have some business to talk over."

"Certainly," nodded the banker as he opened the door allowing Parker to stride into his private office.

Five minutes was all it took for Parker to outline his plan to Spencer for getting the water down from Willow Lake. As he concluded he spread out a check on the desk in front of the banker.

"Now, Spencer, I want you to certify this check."

Spencer shifted nervously as his eyes followed the words: "Payable to: The Union Construction Company, $32,000.00." He put the check down, but remained silent.

"Well, what's the matter?" Parker demanded.

"To be frank with you, Mister Parker," Spencer replied uneasily, "I haven't enough money to cover it."

In an instant, Parker was on his feet, his fist pounding the desk, and his voice booming in all directions. "You mean you can't honor my check?"

"I'm afraid not, Parker. In helping out the farmers the bank has over-extended itself. However——"

"However, nothing!" Parker interrupted. "I'm due at a meeting of the farmers at the Chamber of Commerce at noon. If they find out you're holding up this project——"

"I believe the farmers know my attitude toward their problems," Spencer cut in. "I've always tried to help them."

Parker paused, smiled sarcastically, and remarked, "Then maybe you can think of some practical way of getting water to them?"

With this, Simon the bean grower, had talked his way right up Henry Spencer's alley. "Yes, I *have* thought of that," Spencer fired back. "I've sent for the man who can save the situation."

"Indeed, Mister Spencer?"

"Yes, Mister Parker, I've sent for a man who can make it rain."

"A rainmaker? Ha!" That was enough for Parker. He threw up his hands and stormed out of the office. As he reached the door he stopped to deliver his parting shot. "Spencer! I'll give you just twenty-four hours to arrange credit to honor that check. If not, I'll have the state bank examiners in here this time to-morrow. Rainmaker! Humph!"

THE village clock was striking twelve noon; the farmers at the Chamber of Commerce were juggling peas on their knives; Henry Spencer was salvaging half the bank's assets from a crack in the linoleum—and Roscoe and Billy, the Goober Gullivers, blew into town. They'd have blown right out again, too, only they ran out of gas, had a flat tire, and lost a windshield wiper.

Roscoe climbed out of the car. "This is the place, all right."

"And there's the bank," Billy replied as he lifted the rain-making contraption from the rear seat.

"You go in first," Roscoe instructed. "I'm afraid."

"Afraid to go into a bank?"

"Yeah, one time one of them busted right in my face."

They walked up the steps to the bank. Billy pushed the door open and Roscoe walked in. Margie had seen Roscoe's picture in some magazine—SOME magazine was right!—so she recognized him immediately. She rushed around the counter,

"Let's sit down here and think," Billy said.
"You just sit," replied Roscoe.

grabbed him by the shoulders, and cried enthusiastically, "Oh boy, Mister Roscoe, I'm happy to see you!" She was almost embracing him.

"Oh, you can be a lot happier than *that,*" Roscoe assured her.

Impulsively, Margie threw her arms around him and planted a big kiss right up there alongside the cigar. "Now, that's what I *call* happiness," Roscoe remarked with a raise of the eyebrow. Billy stood there longingly. He wished he had a big black cigar, too.

Margie released herself from the embrace, grabbed Roscoe by the hand, and dragged him across the lobby to her father's office. "Daddy, he's here!" she shouted, pushing open the door.

Spencer's face lighted up. He rushed over to Roscoe, started pumping his hand, and threw joyous greetings all over the place. Margie walked back through the door into the lobby. Roscoe called after her. "Take care of my assistant. But don't be too happy. He's the only one I've got."

Spencer spent the first five minutes of their conference outlining the drouth condition of Lima Junction, its relation to his bank, and also to Simon Parker. Roscoe was perfectly at home. He propped his feet up on the desk, leaned back in his chair, and listened intently. He was all ears and cigar.

"Mister Roscoe," Spencer addressed him, "unless we get water, the situation is hopeless. They'll take over this bank, lock, stock, and barrel."

"Let 'em have the lock and stock," Roscoe advised, "but you keep the barrel to go home in."

Spencer got to his feet. "Every minute counts, Mister Roscoe. Can you start your machine immediately?"

This took the drizzle dispenser by surprise. Besides, his feet were just getting accustomed to the desk. So he stalled. "Not right here. I've got to have a big crowd of people around it. That's the whole principle of my apparatus—mass magnetism. The bigger the crowd, the bigger the shower."

Spencer was not to be denied. "There's a crowd of farmers at the Chamber of Commerce. They're having a luncheon over there."

"Luncheon?" Roscoe got to his feet. "That's all I need, Spency. Come on!"

They dashed out of the office. Spencer grabbed Billy and told him where they were going. Roscoe grabbed Margie. He noted his error and grabbed his machine instead. Margie stood there in the lobby and waved good-by to them. Then she went back to her work. She was knitting ten-dollar bills. Anything to save the bank!

"SO it resolves itself to this. He has sent for a rainmaker. Listen. Did any of you ever see a person who could make it rain?"

They shook their heads.

"Did any of you ever *hear* of a person who could make it rain?"

Again they shook their heads.

This was not a small-time trained seal act, as one might suspect. No, indeed. Simon Parker, the Junction Jughead, was addressing the Chamber of Commerce. From soup to nuts, or rather soup to farmers, Parker had been throwing forth his best two-syllable words, pounding the table, and blustering.

"There you are," he continued. "I offer you something tangible and practical—a flume. What does Spencer offer you?" He paused to work up a sneer, and it was a good one. "A rainmaker. Think of it, gentlemen, a RAINMAKER."

"That's me! Coming up like a storm!" Roscoe had arrived, and was coming in through the folding doors. Spencer and Billy hurried into the room after him with the machine. Roscoe's cigar threw up a smoke screen which enabled them to break through the crowd and reach the table unharmed. The two rainmakers began to set up their apparatus. Parker became violent; Spencer, fearless.

They couldn't see the other locomotive anywhere. "Maybe it got lost," Billy remarked hopefully.

"This is a business meeting, Spencer," Parker raved, "so get these two hoodlums out of here at once or——"

"Just a minute, Parker," the banker broke in. "These boys are friends of mine. I invited them here to demonstrate their machine."

"It's only the law that makes me keep my hands off you." Parker was in a rage.

"Its only the law that makes you keep your hands off a lot of things," Roscoe flipped back.

Simon, the beanbuilder, tried in vain to prevent a demonstration of the machine. But Spencer, by his excellent reputation among the farmers, forced them to give Roscoe and Billy a chance. Roscoe got up on the table. He stood there between two anemic pork chops and a broken-down strawberry shortcake, and explained the workings of his contraption.

"It's the scientific marvel of the age—it's a marvel it works. It's a hydro-electric diversifier, more technically known as a condenser of atmospheric moisture."

The farmers found it difficult to swallow some of Roscoe's vocabulary. But after those mashed potatoes they could swallow anything.

Roscoe showed them a magnet. "This, gentlemen, is the machine's nerve center. This is what makes the machine run. This is what will make the rain to save your crops."

He inserted the magnet, jumped off the table, got into his rain coat, and signaled to Billy. "Let 'er go, son."

Billy turned over the flywheel of the attached outboard motor. The machine coughed, spit, then started with a mighty roar. Fire flew from the sides, Rockets shot out of the pipes. The farmers lurched back. Then came the RAIN.

It poured from all directions. Roscoe

opened an umbrella over Spencer and Billy. Parker and the farmers, drenched, raced wildly out of the building. The rain was still pouring down—one of the rockets had struck the sprinkling system.

LATE afternoon found the rainmakers, with Spencer and Margie, in the banker's office, discussing plans to soak the countryside. Their problem was how to get a large crowd to insure a large rainfall. They didn't know that Simon Parker had stolen the all-important magnet from the machine during the Chamber of Commerce flood.

"There must be some way to attract a crowd," Spencer stated. "Let's sit down here and think."

"Yeah, let's sit down here and think," Billy repeated.

"You just sit," replied Roscoe.

A prolonged silence followed. Then Margie raised her head. "What about a church bazaar? There were at least a hundred at the last one."

"Not enough," Roscoe mumbled.

"Suppose we hang simple Simon," offered Billy.

"We don't want him hanging around," Roscoe grumbled again.

Another silence.

"Say!" Billy shouted excitedly. "I saw a real crowd at the Goober County fair. They staged a sixty-mile-an-hour head-on crash between two automobiles."

This was the necessary lubrication for Roscoe's mental apparatus. He beamed with sudden inspiration. "I've got it! I'll give 'em a crash they can hear around the world."

"With automobiles?" asked Spencer uneasily.

"Automobiles, nothing! Something big—locomotives!!!"

"How are you going to buy two locomotives?" Billy asked.

"Who said anything about buying them?" Roscoe shot back. "I've got an idea I haven't used in years."

His hand dived into his pocket and returned with a fist full of business cards. He shuffled them, cut them, and held them out to Billy.

"Take a card."

Billy took one.

"What's it say?" Roscoe inquired.

"John W. Emeridge, President, Honesty Life Insurance Company."

"Wrong one. Take another."

"Philip J. Eckles, President, International Bankers, Ltd."

"No. Maybe I'm doing this wrong."

"Let me try once more," Billy coaxed as he reached for a card. "How's this? Cornwall Flint, President, Trans-Pacific Railroad."

"Son, you're a genius," Roscoe shouted as he threw the rest of the cards up in the air. "My friends, you are now looking at the president of the Trans-Pacific Railroad."

"But how are you going to get the locomotives?" Margie asked anxiously.

Roscoe removed his cigar, leaned up against the cuspidor, and replied, "Girlie, when the President of the Trans-Pacific asks the Lima Junction Division Manager for two locomotives, the Lima Junction Division Manager says: 'You got 'em.' "

Roscoe replaced his cigar and walked out of the bank.

THE moon came out and went back in again. Evidently it didn't like the looks of things. Billy had eaten dinner at the Spencer home. The Spencers had expected Roscoe, too, but it was now after eight o'clock and punctilious Roscoe hadn't arrived. As a matter of fact, none of them had seen or heard from him since he became a railroad executive. So, the trio was playing a nice three-way checker match and listening to the radio, in order to keep their minds off Roscoe.

The music on the radio suddenly stopped and the local announcer broke in. "Ladies and gentlemen. At this time we have an announcement, from Roscoe the Rainmaker, which is of vital importance to all the citizens of Lima Junction and vicinity. Mister Roscoe is here in the studio now, so I am going to ask him to make his own announcement. Mister Roscoe——"

The Spencer household breathed a sigh of relief. They closed in around the radio to listen to their friend, Old Man River, the shower seller. Immediately Roscoe's voice flooded the room. Roscoe always had to flood something. He must have had water in his veins.

"My friends," it was Roscoe all right, "I regret that I am unable to play my theme song to-night, but the old bassoon sprung a leak late to-day and is under the doctor's care. However, to-morrow morning at ten o'clock, in Lima Park, I will stage the crash of the century. Two fire-eating dragons of the iron rails will come together in a head-on collision. Don't fail to see the larruping locomotives. It will make the 'Wreck of the Old 97' look like the 'one hoss shay.' Beer and pretzels will be served. If you don't like beer and pretzels, you can have pretzels and beer. Incidentally, my assistant and I will demonstrate our rainmaking machine. Come one! Come all! And until to-morrow—yowsuh, yowsuh, and yowsuh!"

The announcer returned. "In just a moment, ladies and gentlemen, the music will continue. This is station L-I-M-A."

LONG before the sun came up, the bean growers from far and wide began to pour into Lima Park. They drove there in automobiles, buggies, wagons, and bicycles—to see "the crash bigger than the one of 1929." At ten o'clock the park was jammed with a milling crowd. The firemen's band was blowing its all for dear old Lima. The locomotives had arrived and were standing face to face at the north end of the park.

Their engineers, however, had come and gone. Not that they weren't interested, but it seems they discovered that some of the village wits had sprinkled dynamite through the coal. Mister Spencer and Margie were seated up on the make-shift platform. The sky was clear, the air was pure, the flags were waving. Everything was ready; everybody was there—everybody except Roscoe and Billy.

The minutes went by, one by one. The crowd became impatient, one by one. Impatient was mild—they were good and sore. Suddenly the flags drooped, the flowers faded, the leaves turned, and Billy and Roscoe drove into the park. They hurried up to the platform, scrambled out of their car, and started to set up the rainmaking machine.

"I'm glad you got here," Spencer greeted them. "This crowd is hot."

"The shower will cool them off," Roscoe replied. "Get 'er going."

Billy wrapped the rope around the flywheel, stood back, and gave it a pull. Nothing happened. He repeated his rope winding, but still nothing happened. Roscoe gave him a strange worried look. The angry crowd set up a cry of "fake," "lousy," "we wuz robbed."

Roscoe took out his stethoscope, pressed it against the machine, and listened. The only thing he heard was Billy suddenly shout, "Somebody has stolen the magnate! It's gone!! It's gone!!!"

This called for an emergency huddle on the platform. Margie said she thought she could find the magnet, if she could find Parker. Scratch a Parker and find a magnet. So, Margie dashed off through the crowd which was still yelling for action. Spencer advised the boys that they had better stage the crash if they wanted to hold the crowd until Margie returned. Roscoe was willing, but it took a little persuasion to get Billy on the insanity side, too. Finally Billy agreed, Roscoe made the announcement, and they climbed into the cabs.

"Don't forget," Roscoe called to Billy.

"When I give the first whistle, start. When I give the second—jump."

"You couldn't give the second whistle first, could you?" was Billy's reply.

BILLY looked about timidly at all the valves and levers in the cab. He opened a valve and a shower of steam poured out. He opened a door and a stream of fire shot out at him. Suddenly he heard a whistle blow—Roscoe had innocently hung his poker on the whistle cord. Billy took this for his first signal. He grabbed the starting lever, pulled it down hard, and fell to the floor. The engine started backwards. Billy was sprawled on the floor with half the starting lever in his hand—broken off at the hilt.

Roscoe saw Billy's engine going off in the wrong direction. This disturbed him no end. He yanked the whistle, shouted, and snorted, but Billy continued in reverse. Roscoe immediately took off in pursuit. They rumbled down the tracks, up the hills, down the dales, around the corners, through the tunnels, and out onto the main line. The main line gave them a more arduous task. They had to dodge in and out of speeding limiteds.

Billy wasn't slow at learning. He learned one thing soon after they hit the main line—his coal car was loaded with dynamite. This would have annoyed any one else, but Billy just ran around the cab like a wild man with the hives. He ran to the window of the cab and held out a box so his pal could read D-Y-N-A-M-I-T-E which was written on it.

Roscoe thumbed the pages of his "What To Do In Embarrassing Moments," signaled Billy to crawl out onto the cowcatcher, and opened the throttle. The two engines came nose to nose. Billy climbed aboard Roscoe's cowcatcher, crawled along the boiler, and into the cab. They were safe from the dynamite! Billy wanted to stop. Roscoe wanted to stop. Their only trouble was they didn't know how.

The two engines roared on. The switchman at a cut-off saw them coming. He threw the switch. The empty-cabbed engine swung into the cut. He threw the switch back. The boys continued straight ahead. As they saw the first engine disappear into the cut-off they shouted for joy. However, a mile later the cut-off tracks returned to the main line—so did the locomotive. Now it was in back of them, but not making their speed.

They rushed on helplessly. Ahead of them loomed the railroad yards with hundreds of frantic men trying to figure a way to route them off the main line. The two engines flew into the yards, passed cars, jumped switches, and ran from one track to another. The men in the switch towers wildly pulled levers and waved flags. Roscoe invariably waved back. After fifteen minutes of guiding the two engines through this horrible maze, the tower switchmen breathed easily again—they saw the engines leaving the yards. Some one had successfully routed them back down the Lima Junction spur.

Billy and Roscoe looked around, as they neared Lima Park, but they couldn't see the other engine anywhere. "Maybe it got lost," Billy remarked hopefully.

"It's probably still trying to find its way out of those yards," Roscoe answered. "But, say, do you think we could stop this one?"

They both pondered a moment and then came to the conclusion that maybe if they let out all the steam that the engine would stop. They opened the valves, the steam poured out, and they eased to a stop right where they had started from in Lima Park.

The crowd was still there and waiting—waiting to get their hands on Roscoe and Billy. The Rainmakers stepped down from the cab. Margie and her father were there to meet them.

"I found the magnet!" Margie cried excitedly. "It was in Mister Parker's car. Must have dropped out of his pocket."

The boys gave a cheer, Spencer quieted down the crowd, and they all gathered around the platform and the rainmaking machine. Roscoe pushed the magnet into place while Billy was winding rope on the flywheel. The rope was jerked. Then followed a slow rumble, a mighty roar, and a thunderous CRASH! It wasn't the machine—the other locomotive had caught up.

The vibration of the crash not only shook the bean growers, but the rain machine as well. In fact, it shook it so hard that it began to run. Roscoe started to run, too, for he had never seen the machine work before either. But he ran back again for his umbrella. It was beginning to rain! RAIN!

Rain was coming to Lima Junction. It would have kept on coming only it changed to snow. A blizzard was coming to Lima Junction.

"What h-h-h-happened?" Billy asked, his teeth chattering.

"The motor was cold," Roscoe nonchalantly flashed back, as he brushed the snow away from his cigar.

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 49

THE THREE MUSKETEERS

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, with Walter Abel, Paul Lukas, Ralph Forbes, Margot Grahame, and Heather Angel.

Introducing MGM's latest find, Walter Abel! Watching this able actor dash through the part of d'Artagnan, the young swordsman from Gascony, you'll quickly forget about Doug Fairbanks' interpretation of the rôle several years back. This new edition of the famous Dumas story is an improvement over the old one in every way. Which, considering that its predecessor made film history, is saying a lot!

WE HOPE HOLLYWOOD WILL CONTINUE MAKING THESE THRILLING COSTUME DRAMAS.

REMEMBER LAST NIGHT?

A Universal picture, with Edward Arnold, Robert Young, Constance Cummings, Robert Armstrong, George Meeker, and Reginald Denny.

They find George Meeker dead, shot through the heart, the morning after the big party. But no one can remember what happened after the drinks started flowing freely. There are a hundred complications, more murders, mysterious disappearances. It's a good-natured mystery with a great cast, headed by Edward (Diamond Jim) Arnold.

AS ENTERTAINING A MOVIE AS YOU COULD ASK FOR, EVEN IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE IT REALLY HAPPENED.

Continued on page 105

EAST of JAVA

He fled from the arm of the law into the jaws of a lion—and the life of an innocent girl hung in the balance!

CAPTAIN WONG BO sat still as a deadly snake about to strike. Beneath him, the keel of his three-masted schooner, *Sea Dragon,* slid silently through the ominously calm ocean near the East African coast. From the well-deck, forward of his cabin, the growls of the caged wild animals that formed his cargo sent a note of menace into the quiet of the shadowy room, lit by a single small lamp.

The Chinaman's face was as expressionless as that of the jade chessmen standing on the board before him, but the glitter of his eyes under their hooded lids was more menacing than the snarls of his captive beasts. A short time ago he had received a radio message that one of the three passengers was "Nails" McGovern, an American gangster wanted by the police of three continents. McGovern's extradition papers were waiting at their port of destination. There was a reward of $20,000——

Nails McGovern! That would be "Harvey Bowers," Wong Bo decided. Bowers had taken ship at Simba Sao. He had offered Wong Bo $1,000 for the cabin reserved by Ann Martin, a pretty American girl leaving British East Africa for home, now that her parents were dead. The Oriental had accepted the money, but Bowers, captivated by Ann's beauty, had surrendered the cabin to her on sight.

Bowers' eyes had hungered for her and hell-fire had leaped up in them when Ann had shown a preference for Larry Page, the young American salesman, the *Sea Dragon's* third passenger. Ann and Larry were on deck now under the stars. Across the chessboard from Wong Bo, his great fingers moving a costly jade pawn, sat Bowers, a red-headed giant with a reckless look in his eyes as dangerous as dynamite. Did he know of that warning over the radio? The answer to Wong Bo's unspoken question came suddenly.

"Any news on the wireless?" asked Bowers, completing his move on the chessboard.

"Interesting case about fugitive from justice," purred the captain. "American gangster whom British promise to apprehend." He moved a chessman, then indicated the board. "Your move dangerous."

"Now I am in the clear," growled Bowers, moving another pawn, "and so will this guy be when the opportune time comes."

"But it is known that he sails like ourselves for North along these very waters to British port. Poor fellow," Wong Bo sighed, "only his ship captain able to save him now."

"Why the captain?"

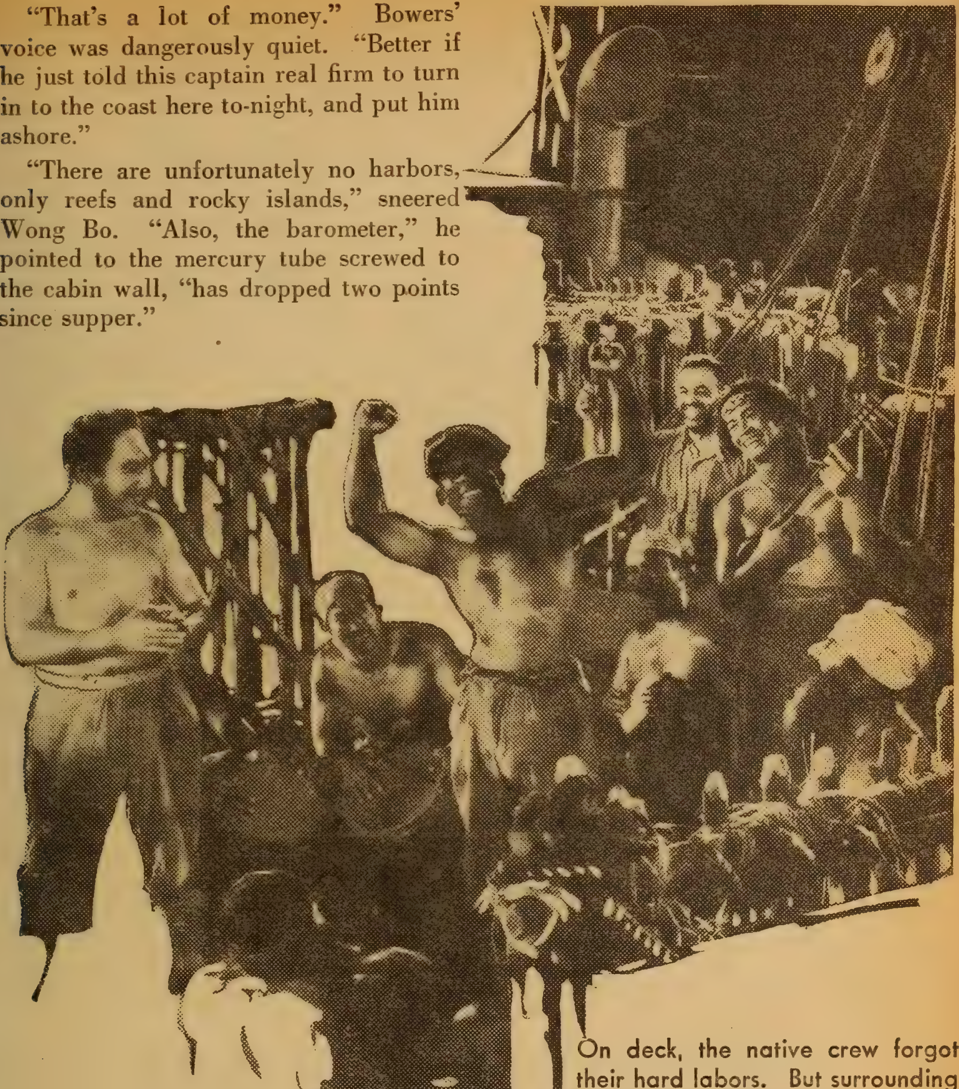
"Maybe such officer provide opportunity for this man to slip ashore as member of crew."

"What would make the captain do this for our friend?" Bowers kept up the pretense.

"Possibly—er—fifty thousand dollars, American dollars, in advance."

"That's a lot of money." Bowers' voice was dangerously quiet. "Better if he just told this captain real firm to turn in to the coast here to-night, and put him ashore."

"There are unfortunately no harbors, only reefs and rocky islands," sneered Wong Bo. "Also, the barometer," he pointed to the mercury tube screwed to the cabin wall, "has dropped two points since supper."



On deck, the native crew forgot their hard labors. But surrounding them were caged wild beasts, and overhead the gathering typhoon!

Bowers tore the window curtain aside and peered into the starry sky.

"Looks all right to me," he said.

"Always look all right," Wong Bo countered blandly. "Typhoon give no warning."

"—while me, I always do," Bowers completed the thought.

There was a blur of lightning motion. His right hand streaked from his left armpit. The Chinese captain found himself staring into the black muzzle of a heavy revolver and in a daze of terror heard the fugitive's voice rasp.

"Call the mate! Tell him to head for the coast! Speak English!"

Looking into that gun nozzle and the more deadly eyes behind it, Wong Bo realized that his game was up. He called Johnson, his Negro mate, and gave the orders. But when the bewildered mate had departed and Bowers had calmly resumed his seat at the chessboard, some premonition drew the Chinaman's eyes again to the barometer. What he saw there froze the blood in his veins. The mercury had dropped to the bottom! The dreaded typhoon was upon them!

"Mr. Bowers," Wong Bo choked out, "let me tell mate to head for open sea!"

But it was too late for that. With the eerie shriek of a lost soul, screaming out of a sky suddenly black with ragged, racing clouds, the typhoon struck like a cobra. Bowers and Wong Bo heard the yells of the frightened crew, the howls of the animals. Then the whole ship shook as the storm wind struck her in a solid mass.

LIKE a man gone mad, Bowers hurled himself against the cabin door nailed shut by the pressure of the wind. Ann Martin was out on that tornado-swept deck. He must get to her. As he smashed his way out, the sails burst above him like paper bags. He saw Ann and Larry clinging to a fallen boom. A foaming wall of water cascaded down upon the deck.

Through the boiling torrent, Bowers fought his way to the man and girl clinging helplessly to the boom rope. He had to pass the animal cages. The terrified beasts struck at him through the bars of their prisons. Foam blinded Bowers. When his eyes cleared again he saw the rope was parting. One step more—another—just as the strands snapped he reached them. His corded arms swept round Ann's slim body. He braced Larry against his shoulder. Step by step they struggled toward one of the boats being launched by the panic-stricken Malay crew.

As Bowers lifted Ann and Larry into the boat, he felt the whole ship crack below him as she smashed on a sunken reef. Hurriedly, he moved to join them when Ann's gesture stopped him.

"Wait!" she cried. "Muller——"

Whirling about, Bowers saw the former lion tamer, who was in charge of the shipment of wild animals, struggling frantically with the cages. Fighting his way across the fury-swept deck, he grasped the German's arm.

"Come on!" he shouted against the howling typhoon. "Ship's cracking up!"

"But my cats——"

Bowers looked at the man-eating beasts, now cowering with fear in their

THE CAST

CHARLES BICKFORD	Bowers
FRANK ALBERTSON	Larry
ELIZABETH YOUNG	Ann
Leslie Fenton	Wong Bo
Clarence Muse	Johnson
Siegfried Rumann	Muller

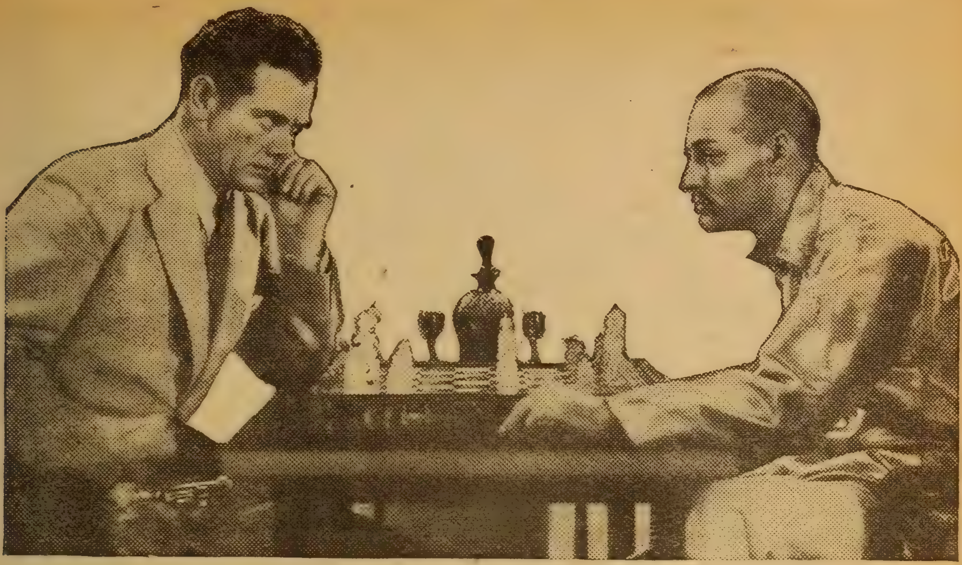
A fictionization of the Universal picture "East Of Java," which was adapted from Gouvenor Morris' celebrated story, "Tiger Island."

UNIVERSAL PRODUCTION

Screenplay by Paul Perez and James Ashmore Creelman.

Directed by
George Melford.

A PAUL KOHNER PRODUCTION.



Wong Bo realized that his game was up. He gave the orders.

crates. A strange, primitive pity for these huge and, now, helpless beasts came over him. "All right. But snap into it! We can't wait long!"

A moment later, as the trainer joined them in the boat, Bowers saw the lithe, tawny forms of the man eaters scrambling over the decks. Then everything went out of sight in a welter of spray as their boat struck the water and pulled for the unknown land ahead.

IT was not until the sun-rose next morning that the survivors of the wreck could get any idea of their possible fate. They found themselves on the beach of a tropical island. Behind them lay a dense jungle from which rose a steep volcanic peak. The ship was on the reef before them, hopelessly broken up.

Gathered around the fire Bowers had built were Larry and Ann, Wong Bo, Hans Muller with his whip, and Lee the Chinese steward boy whom they all had come to like on the short voyage. He had hurt his foot in the wreck. He still carried Larry's parrot, a present from the British Resident of Simba Sao.

As they looked, the wreck slipped from the reef and disappeared. Johnson, the Negro mate, began to pray. A Malay lute player, who had escaped drowning with them, burst into a torrent of shrill invective against Wong Bo. Bowers saw they were mad with panic. It had to be stopped now before it could spread. With a smashing hook to the jaw he sent the lute player sprawling. He kicked Johnson erect. Then he whirled on them all.

"It looks as if we might spend some time together on this island," he barked. "All right! Any outfit I'm with I run. I'll fight for you or with you. Any objections?"

His eyes roved sardonically from face to face. One glance met his fearlessly; Larry's.

"There's only one thing to do," said that youth, ignoring Bowers' challenging for leadership. "Salvage the wreckage and explore this cove for water."

"There's plenty of water back in those trees," Bowers indicated the jungle, "and fruit."

"And maybe a few beasts who don't live on fruit," Larry cautioned.

"And maybe the bogeyman," scoffed Bowers. "Come on. Let's look."

Without waiting to see if any one followed him, the red-haired giant started for the brush. His code was the code of the jungle; victory to the strongest muscles and most dauntless courage. For the thinking man, represented by Larry, he had only the deepest contempt. He saw, however, that the boy was not afraid of his strength and that Ann despised it and thought him brutal. This filled him with icy fury. He would show them. He grasped his club and strode toward the trees.

Then came a sound that brought the party to a dead stop—the thunderous roar of a lion—the pounce of powerful padded feet—a howl of terror, and then the snarl of the king of beasts rending his prey.

"A lion!" gasped Muller, who had been called "The Fearless" in the German circuses before his nerve had broken and reduced him to the low estate of animal collector for tent shows. "That means the animals swam ashore. The whole bunch must be right in here." His trembling finger pointed to the trees for which they were heading.

"What do you say we explore the cove for a while?" asked Larry, gently sarcastic.

Bowers frowned into the youngster's eyes which met his, smiling but unflinching. Here was an antagonist who was going to be harder to conquer than the fanged killers of the jungle. Beaten in this first skirmish for leadership, Bowers went with the party to the cove.

Here they foraged about all day, looking for a suitable camping place, while from the thick forest round about came the sound of infuriated animals fighting to the death. They, however, were not attacked in their defenseless state, with only Bowers' revolver for protection. As long as the beasts had each other to devour they would spare the humans. But that could not be long. They must find a safe refuge before nightfall or meet certain death.

THE sun was already sinking toward the west when they found what they sought, a little plateau on the slope of a volcanic cliff beside the cove, shaded by fruit trees and cooled by a stream of clear water. Here they built a fire and brought all their few possessions salvaged from the schooner. Clouds were massing overhead, but they paid no heed until Muller felt a drop of rain on his hand and cried out in alarm. For a moment the others could not understand his excitement. Bowers laughed:

"Say, we've been wet all day long."

"I know," Muller spluttered, "but the fire—our protection from the lions—the rain must put it out."

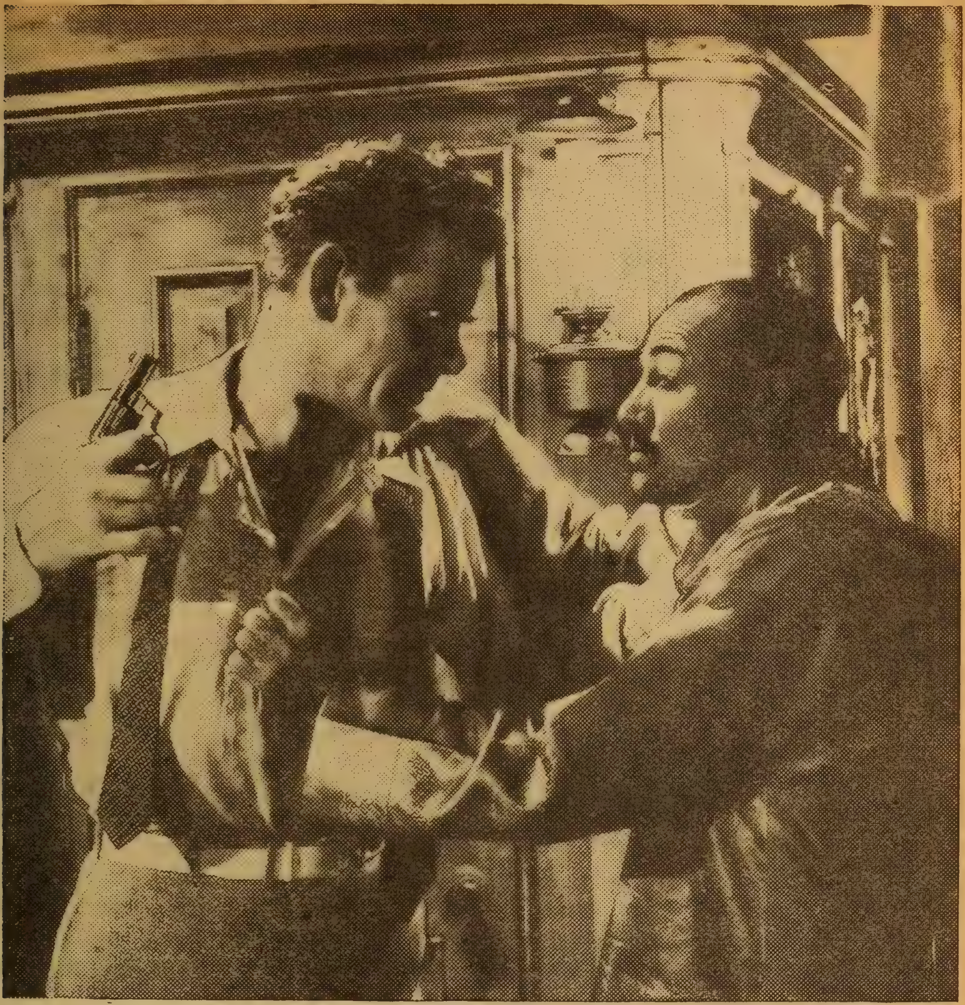
"That's serious." Bowers seized command at the instant of crisis. "Get a stick out of that fire, every one of you." He had spied a cave, well up the slope of the cliff. "They'll burn long enough to get us up there."

Collecting their possessions and each taking a torch, the castaways struggled up a steep trail toward the cave through the shower. Suddenly, with a clatter of hoofs and a shrill neigh of terror, a zebra darted across their path, hotly pursued by a lion. The zebra rushed into the cave. The lion followed.

For a moment the little party stood dumfounded. Then Bowers, setting his jaw like a steel vise, charged straight for the cave as the zebra's death shriek and the growls of the lion echoed from the cavern mouth. Into the black hole he darted. Before him in the gloom he saw two great green eyes glaring at him. He struck at them with his torch and axe.

"Out of there, you lugs!" he roared, defying the beast's attack. "Out of there, I say!"

The green eyes vanished before him. He followed, shouting. Then he saw that



"Mr. Bowers," Wong Bo choked out, "let me tell mate to head for open sea!"

the cave was really a passage through the rock. Down the back slope he saw the lion retreating, dragging the zebra with him. With a triumphant laugh, Bowers swaggered back to the mouth of the cave and swung his arms to the others. In spite of herself, Ann Martin felt her heart glow for that primitive, heroic figure, all man—every inch of him!

"Come on up," he shouted to them. "We're moving in!"

"We're coming," Ann heard herself answer, fascinated.

IN the day that followed, their first night in the cave, Ann still felt the power of the ex-gunman's personality that thrilled her and made her afraid of herself. With Larry nearby, she felt more secure. Furnished with their scattered belongings, the rude cave might have been a real home with him there but for the roars of the animals battling outside, which would not permit that feeling to exist.

Then suddenly they suffered their first loss. The Malay lute player was carried off by a lion. With their weaker animal victims being rapidly killed off, hunger was making the great killers more daring. As night closed in, Ann felt terribly afraid and alone as she waited for Larry to return from making a deadfall of logs with which he hoped to kill a lion.

There came a step beside her. She looked up hopefully, then frowned. It was not Larry. It was Bowers. His eyes gloated over her.

"Lonely?" he asked thickly.

"Just chilly." She tried to keep her voice firm. "I think I'll go in."

As she made a move to re-enter the cliff-cave, Bowers blocked her way. She tried to retreat. The blind backward step brought her foot over the cliff's edge. Bowers caught her in his arms just in time.

"What did you do that for?" he growled, gruffness masking his concern.

"You frightened me," she gasped. Then his fiery lips were upon hers, smothering them with kisses. Her senses were reeling in his embrace when Larry's voice came.

"Ann, Ann! Come quick!

She stood staring at Bowers as though hypnotized, her hand at her throat.

"Go on! Go on!" he commanded, pushing her from him. Only then was she able to run with the others to where a lion lay dying in Larry's crude trap. She hurried to the shelter of his arms, but even as they stood there, a scream of agony came from the cave where the Negro mate had been left, crouching by the fire. Too late, they rushed up the slope. Over the crest of the cliff they saw a tawny form bound with the limp body of poor Johnson hanging from its jaws.

Panic-stricken, Muller the Fearless, the last vestiges of his frayed nerves cracking under pressure, yelled with fright and darted away from the cave to the jungle. Bowers pounced on him, whirled him backward, and slugged him unconscious with a jolt to the jaw. From the jungle just beyond, the snarl of waiting lions told what his fate would have been, as Bowers carried his senseless form to safety.

ANN felt, too, that she could stand no more of the suspense. Better rush out among the cruel fangs and claws and have it over with! Not this unbearable torture of the nerves waiting for a death that must come! They could never escape. Never escape! The words beat steadily through her uneasy sleep and they were fresh in her mind when she awoke at dawn. Yet there was one of them that might escape. The parrot from Simba Sao which seemed to mock their plight with its silly prattle. She brought the cage out on the cliff ledge and opened the door. The parrot squawked. It awakened Larry. He ran out, alarmed.

"What's wrong?

"I'm setting him free," Ann replied. "Giving him a chance. Perhaps he may find food."

"Food?" Larry exclaimed. "He'll fly straight home!" Then, realizing what this meant and seeing the same hope dawn in Ann's eyes, he shouted, "Great Scott! That's it." He stared about at the others who were now grouped about them, all but Bowers who had gone for water to the rill below.

"Home to Simba Sao! We'll send a message! Who's got a pencil?"

After tense moments of wild activity, in which all the furnishings of the cave were turned topsy-turvy, a pencil was found in little Lee's pocket. The flyleaf of the English text book the boy always carried, was used for note paper. Larry wrote on the flyleaf without tearing it out, using the book for backing:

"Shipwrecked and marooned on island" the words raced over the paper. "Send help. Our position is——" He turned to Wong Bo. "Can you write our position?"

"Can do," replied the captain with the

Everything went out of sight in a welter of spray as their boat struck the water.

nerveless calm which had never deserted him through the nights of horror.

He took the book and wrote on the flyleaf, also using the book for backing. He paused, his eyes gleaming strangely, as he asked Larry:

"This bird will return to the Resident of Simba Sao, you say?"

"That's the idea," Larry answered.

Wong Bo wrote more on the paper and tore it out, wrapping it in a bit of silk from his jacket sleeve. He explained this would keep the paper safe from rain. They bound the note to the parrot's leg with silk thread and set it free. They watched anxiously hoping it would fly to the West where Simba Sao lay. But it flew low toward the woods.

Down by the spring, Bowers filling his bucket at the brook, looked up when he heard the parrot's familiar squawk and saw the bird alight, picking at the note on its leg. He grabbed for it but it flew off. He watched it, puzzled.

"And now it's carrier pigeons," he mocked as he entered the cave.

"We turned him loose," Larry explained. "The Resident said he'd fly straight home if he ever got away. I had forgotten. We sent a message on the flyleaf of Lee's book. Wong Bo wrote our position."

He whirled on them all. "Any outfit I'm with, I run!" he barked. "Any objections?"

"Wong Bo did?" Bowers looked suspiciously at the captain. "Say, let's take a look at that book."

Taking the book from Lee, he held it at an angle. He saw faint indentations on the page opposite the torn flyleaf made by the pressure of the pencil in writing the note. With another glance at the Chinese captain's inscrutable face, Bowers took the pencil from Lee's pocket and walked to the mouth of the cave. There he sat down and began to rub the flat edge of the pencil back and forth across the blank page. The impression of the writing slowly began to show up under this treatment.

No one watched Wong Bo as he sidled away from the others and, silent as a shadow, crept along the corridor to the cave mouth till he could peer over Bowers' shoulder. Bowers heard his catlike approach, but did not look up as he said casually:

"Trying to figure our position. What did you give in the message?"

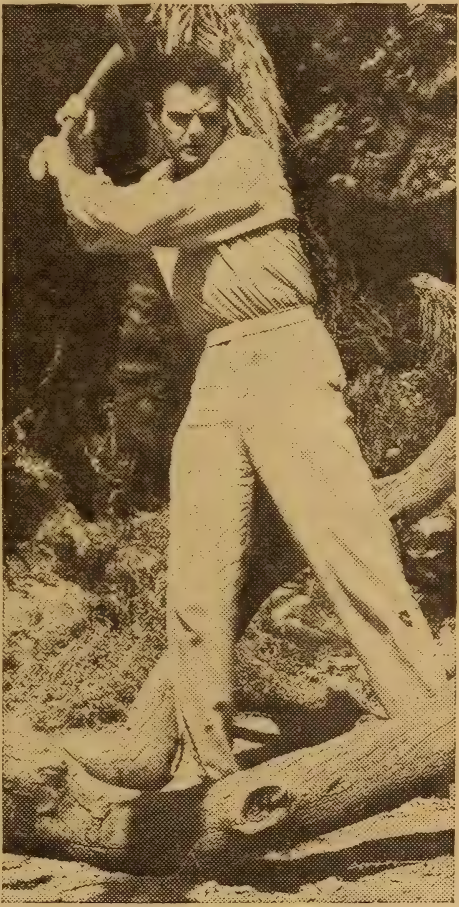
"Off coast, forty degrees longitude, East of Greenwich," the Oriental answered, relieved.

"That all the message said?" asked Bowers, still working. "I thought you might be adding something about me—the $20,000 reward——"

"Mister Bowers, you make joke." Wong Bo laughed as he slipped a slender dagger from his sleeve and began to trim his nails with it.

"Yes, quite a joke," growled Bowers. "Now here's something that will give you a real laugh. Take a look at this"

He thrust the book before Wong Bo's eyes. "Shipwrecked on island off coast," the Chinaman read. "Send immediate help. Our position is 40 degrees longitude, East Greenwich. Nails McGovern with party. Claim reward. Wong Bo, Captain."



Wood for the fires to protect them from the hunger-maddened beasts—that's what they needed!

SWIFT as a cat, Wong Bo struck with his dagger at Bowers' heart. Bowers parried with his forearm, the blood spurting out. As the captain's dagger darted down again, Bowers stepped in under the stab and thudded his right to the point of Wong Bo's chin. Back to the cliff edge tottered the Chinaman. He hung there a minute fighting for balance. Then, screaming, he fell into the abyss.

Bowers watched his body smash to a pulp on the jagged rocks below. Then he sat down and clumsily tried to bandage his wounded arm. Ann came to his side. She sank to her knees beside him and helped him fix his bandage. Then her eyes met his. He saw in them her revulsion.

"Hate to touch me, eh?" he said.

"Yes, I do." She drew back from him into Larry's arms.

"Why didn't you give him a chance?" Larry demanded of Bowers.

"Read that!" The wounded man showed them the message in Lee's book.

Larry read Wong Bo's treacherous message and returned the book to Bowers.

"He betrayed you, yes. Pulled a knife too," he said, "but you killed him."

"Say, what do you mugs think I am?" Bowers rose, furious, towering over them.

"I'll tell you," Ann flared as Larry tried to check her. "Something out of the jungle that doesn't belong in the world to-day! Something that ought to be stamped out—destroyed——"

Rage swelled the veins in Bowers' temples. His voice grew hoarse with anger.

"What do you know about me, or what I am or what I've been?"

"Why did Wong Bo add that message?" cried Ann.

"Oh, so that's it," answered Bowers. "Well, look at me! Nails, Nails McGovern—the gangster with a price on his head—$20,000. Better remember that, Candy Kid," he sneered at Larry. "If we get out of here, it'll be a nice little nest egg to start housekeeping on. But if we ever hope to get out of here—if you ever hope to see home again—we've got to stick together. We're trapped as it is in here. Before long, we may be starving. I told you I'd fight for you or against you——"

Thrusting Wong Bo's dagger into his belt and picking up the axe, which he had salvaged from the wreck, he turned back into the cave. Ann and Larry stood side by side, looking down into the valley where the fog hung over the deadly swamps and the terrible jungles. Not a sound came from below.

"They're all in the other valley, behind us," Larry said, realizing too well their danger in this tunnel cave with two entrances, one on a long rocky slope down to the spring, the other straight down the cliff face to the sea, only to be descended by climbing down on vines. He felt Ann tremble in his arms as she replied,

"Yes, I know. I heard them."

"Don't let yourself go to pieces," he comforted her. "Look, my arm's around you. I love you!"

"I love you too! We'll see it through together at the finish, won't we?"

"Finish! We're not finishing!" cried Larry. "We've got a bird halfway to Simba Sao to bring help."

"Oh, Larry," she breathed, "we've got so much to live for! Let's pray he'll get through with the message."

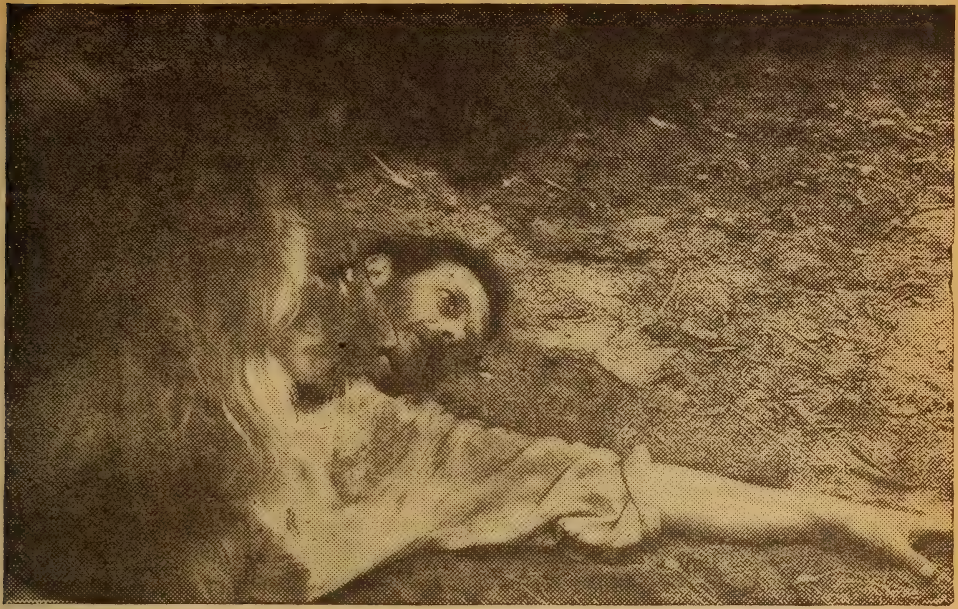
"Prayers are a swell idea," they turned at the words to see Bowers behind them, "but you won't live to see them answered unless we get food and water right now." He pointed toward the woods. "Down to the spring and then right across to those cocoanut trees. We've got to take a chance while the beasts are away."

"No, no, Larry," Ann begged. "Don't go. You'll be killed."

"Ann, he's right," Larry replied quietly.

He picked up his axe and a water bucket and followed Bowers down the slope. Little Lee limped with them on his wounded foot, but Muller, nerve shattered, had remained behind with Ann. Cautiously sliding through the tangle, but making the best speed they dared, they got to the spring. Not a sound from the steaming jungles about them. They filled their water cans and loaded their shirts with cocoanuts. It all seemed too easy.

Coming back was more difficult. Weighed down with their burdens, progress was slow and painful. The fog was thickening down over the marshes as they waded up to their knees in the stagnant water. They could not see a foot before them. Still that reassuring silence from the jungle as they crept toward the cliff! Then suddenly Bowers whirled as the slimy waters were lashed into fury



It was hard to believe that even now, the body of a hero was being torn by savage beasts.

almost under his feet and great jaws snapped up at him.

Alligators!

"Look out!" he shouted, snatching out for support as he slashed at the great scaly forms with his axe. He felt the blade sink into flesh and bone and warm blood splash on his arm. He struck again and again till all was still. But now all hope of concealment was gone. It was certain death to wait a second longer!

"Hurry," Bowers commanded, "every man-eater in the valley's heard us."

From far back in the trees a lion's roar echoed his words. Summoning all their strength they splashed across the swamp, Bowers in the front although his load was double that of the others. He dared not look back—that cost time. Only ahead, peering desperately through the fog and high reeds for the slope that meant safety. The roars came nearer. He could hear the heavy tread of murderous feet. Nearer—nearer—would the slope never appear? Then came Lee's voice shrieking behind him in terror.

He looked back, just as a giant lion pounced on the brave Chinese boy and leaped back with its prey into the bushes. Then all went red before Bowers' eyes. Dropping his burdens, he charged the pursuing lions, brandishing his axe, bellowing with fury! They quailed before his rush, until Larry was able to lift the food and water up the rocks into the cave.

But the China boy's agonized death was not to end the horror of the night. Later, despondent, huddled together around their tiny protecting flames, they heard the hunger-maddened beasts quarreling among themselves in the valley below. None of them noticed Hans Muller, now thoroughly maddened by fear, steal away into the shadows of their cave.

It was only when they heard him laughing hysterically that they rushed to the hillside opening to see him striding majestically down the path, dressed once more in his red circus coat, cracking his whip defiantly in the night air! Once more, he was Muller the Fearless, the lion-tamer of Hamburg!

There was a sudden snarl, and his laugh broke into a scream of mortal agony. Sick at heart, but powerless to help, the three castaways stood as if hypnotized, listening to his dying shrieks. Soon, there was nothing but the renewed roaring of the beasts.

Only three of them left! Nodding to Larry to assist the fainting Ann inside the cave, Bowers took his station as sentinel outside. He gripped his axe handle in impotent fury. At last he had met something stronger than himself. Well, he would go down fighting. All night he watched as the lions snarled below. Six of them down there, he thought. Six. Six. Why were his eyelids so heavy? He must not sleep. He must not—sleep.

SUDDENLY he started up. Sunlight was pouring into the cave. He had been asleep. Thank God the others were safe; he had not gotten them killed by his carelessness. Then something at the cave mouth caught his eye—a ridge of tawny hair rising over the edge of the floor—two yellow eyes glaring at him. The lions were closing in!

As he looked two more appeared. Yelling wildly, he snatched a blazing brand from the fire and hurled it in the animals' faces. They scampered away, but only as far as the nearest bushes. Bowers looked into the ashen faces of his companions who had awakened and stood by him.

"How much more firewood?" he demanded.

"That's the last of it." Larry nodded toward the wood on the fire as Ann shuddered in his arms.

"They're coming back." Bowers leaned forward as he watched the cave entrance.

Tawny forms stole in, crept forward a little. Then farther. They crouched, tails lashing.

"Six," breathed Ann. "They're all there."

"Six. That's right," said Larry. "That means the valley back of us," he indicated the cave opening on the cliff side, "is clear."

"Let's try anything," cried Ann eagerly. "We've got to!"

"Stay right here. It's our only chance," grated Bowers, watching the lions creep nearer.

His hand went to the gun in his shoulder holster. He drew it and looked at the chambers. Two bullets left! He handed the weapon to Larry with a meaning glance at Ann.

"Useless against lions," he said.

"That's right, Larry," Ann echoed to her sweetheart. "Useless against lions."

She kissed his cheek and waited for the attack. The lions were just on the other side of the fire now. In a little while it would be over, now when life was so sweet. Their lone effort had failed. The parrot had not reached Simba Sao.

There was a humming noise in Ann's ears. The blood pounding in excitement, she thought. She must keep cool, she told herself. Still the humming persisted. It grew louder. She looked at Larry. He had heard something too. Now it was very plain. Could it be——?

They rushed to the cliff edge. There in the sky, circling toward the island, was an airplane. Even as they yelled aloft, it passed by, heading inland.

"They didn't see us," Larry shouted as he and Ann ran back to Bowers.

"Get back there before I brain you!" snapped Bowers without taking his eyes off the advancing lions. "Signal them. Fire the cane brake!" Then as Larry picked up a blazing stick, "Good luck, kids. Get going!"

"You can't stay here," objected Larry. "The fire's almost out."

"Damn you!" Bowers snarled. "Think of the girl. Get going! Get down on the beach where they'll see you! I'll hold the lions back."

Larry returned Bowers' gun. Touched by Bowers' willingness to risk his life for them, Ann flung her arms about him and kissed his lips.

Larry flung his firebrand down the cliff into the cane stalks. The flame flickered. It disappeared. Then suddenly it seemed to catch new life. A pillar of smoke rose past them into the sky, as they grasped a stout vine and began climbing down. They saw the plane wheel and head back.

"Come on, Bowers, come on!" Larry shouted. "Bowers! Bowers!"

Looking back as they sprinted across the cane brake to the plane which had landed on the beach and was rolling toward them, they saw Bowers come to the cliff edge, hurl his firebrands back at the pursuing lions, and start racing, hand over hand, down the vine. Roaring, a lion sprang for him and missed, hurtling past him to the ground. Unharmed, the beast sprang at him again. He drew his gun, as other lions came to the cave rim. Then he shouted to Ann and Larry.

"Take off, damn you, take off!"

They saw the lions spring from above. They saw Bowers fire once at them. Then, with his last bullet they saw him press the muzzle to his temple. They heard the shot——

HIGH over the island, Larry and Ann looked down. It was hard to believe that that beautiful green garden surrounded by sparkling blue sea could be the scene of the horror they had lived through; that even now, the body of a hero was being torn by savage beasts there.

Their pilot, who had flown from Simba Sao in response to the parrot's message, broke in on their reverie.

"That was McGovern, the fugitive, wasn't it?" he asked.

"No, sir," denied Larry emphatically. "That was Bowers, a real man!"

"Oh, if you only knew how real," Ann faltered. Her voice broke as the tears came and Larry's arms went round her.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

In filming one of the closing sequences where Charles Bickford is supposed to be attacked by a lion, he was severely mangled by the suddenly infuriated beast!

Bickford was supposed to be standing, facing the lion, about fifteen or twenty feet away. The lion was to leap at him, but actually miss him by a few feet. That was the way it was planned.

However he landed directly on him, his cruel hooked claws tearing into Bickford's flesh! Before anyone could interfere, the suddenly blood-mad beast had ripped his fangs into the actor's throat, slashing a murderous gash that missed his jugular vein by the barest fraction of an inch!

No one present has yet been able to tell how they drove the seven-hundred-pound lion away before he had completed his murderous task. But, fortunately, they managed to, and Mr. Bickford was rushed to the hospital where, weak from the loss of blood but still living, his wounds were mended.

This thrilling account is an answer, for all time, to the query, "Do movie stars take chances?" They do! MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE'S hat is off to Charles Bickford and EAST OF JAVA!

TWO on the SIDE

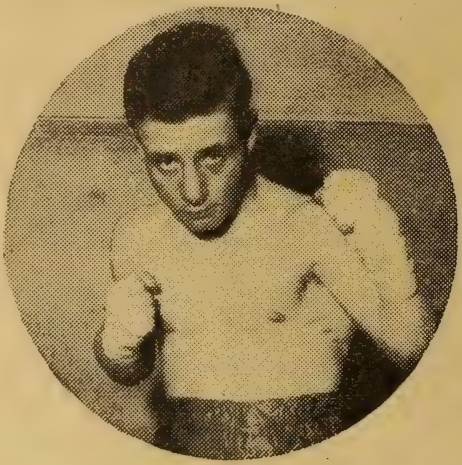
If you have ever wondered what a movie usher is like out of uniform, read this. And if you have ever wanted to be an usher. don't fail to read it!

THERE are upward of six thousand seats in the world's largest theater—Radio City Music Hall, of course—and on an average of 100,000 people a week want to sit in them. That, in the language of Mr. J. E. McHale, assistant manager of the theater, whose duty it is to worry about such things, creates "quite a problem."

The solution to the problem, as worked out by Mr. McHale and his fellow executives, consists of maintaining a staff of nearly one hundred ushers—one hundred young men whose training and comportment are on a par with the finest specimens that might be found in either West Point or Annapolis. You'll notice a lot of things about them that are different, when you visit the Music Hall.

For instance, there is the way they stand at attention while they are on duty, and yet unoccupied for the moment. Heels together, stomach in, chest out, chin up, eyes front, hands clasped behind the back, they look like so many Coldstream Guards. But don't think that they have come by this military stiffness without a struggle!

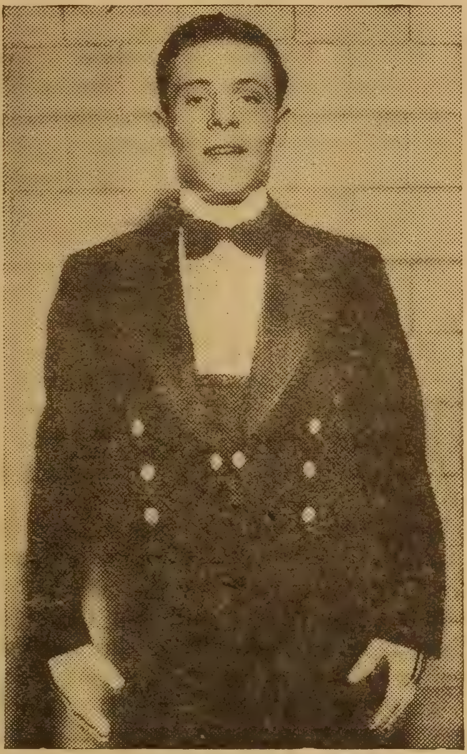
The first usher you come in contact with—the first one will invariably make you wonder whether he has a ramrod down his back; it's only after you have seen several of them, all in the same pose of tense expectancy, that you become accustomed to the idea—may have been a shy farm boy on his first visit to New York, only a few months back. He may have been playing baseball on a corner lot some place up in the Bronx during the summer. He may just have received a degree in law or science from one of the world's largest universities. But here he is, now, standing stiff as a West Pointer on review, and as deadly earnest about seeing that you enjoy your visit to his theater as an army man would be about defending our country in time of war!


GEORGIE COYLE,
of Golden Gloves fame.

It's a wonderful ushering system that they have instituted for the benefit of their 100,000 weekly patrons. A system that is none too easily crashed, as well! The other day, for instance, there were about forty young men applying for positions as ushers. They stood in a long single line—some slightly nervous and fidgety, some in freshly pressed suits, all of them scrubbed and shiny.

They were being interviewed by Mr. McHale, and as each of the young fellows—they were all between 17 and 20 years old—walked away, he rated them on his memo pad just as if they were feature photoplays. Only one got four stars—that meant "excellent"—and most of them rated a measly one or two. That's his system of designing their chances.

The quiet young fellow who got the four stars was from Nashville, Tennessee. He came to New York, he said, to go to art school, and he wanted to get a part-time job so that he could go on with his studies. He thought, too, that starting in as an usher, there might be an opening sometime for him in the costume and scenic designing departments. There was another strapping young chap in lumpy-looking tweeds and heavy brogues. He was from London, he said in a clipped English accent, and he thought it would be ripping to be an usher.



Do you recognize this fellow? He's the same Georgie Coyle, whose picture in ring togs faces this page. Here he is in his Radio City Music Hall usher's uniform.

What school had he attended?

"Jolly well nevah attended school," he said. "Had tutors—that sort of thing—don't you know." He got one star.

Mr. McHale asked most of them why they thought they'd like to work at the Music Hall and what their ambitions were. One fellow—a freckle-faced redhead with a swell cowlick—said he "picked on the Music Hall because he liked the shows here and thought it'd be nice to see them for nothing."

Ambition?

"My ambition just now," he grinned, "is to get the job."

He got two and a half stars—the half-star for honesty, probably.

Out of every hundred applicants interviewed approximately one usher emerges. He then has two weeks' training in which he learns the intricate system by which the ushers signal to each other—they have signals for everything under the sun. He learns what to do in every imaginable emergency, how to care for his four complete uniforms, shoes, shirts, collars, ties, gloves, cuff links, studs and buttons. He is taught how to stand, how to walk across the foyer, how to walk upstairs. He learns that the Radio City Music Hall likes its ushers with their hands behind their backs unless they are being spoken to. (Try them, some time. Go up to one to speak to him, and watch how his arms snap down to his sides!) He finds out what it means to drill in group formations, marching and wheeling until he is no longer a conspicuous individual, but part of a smoothly-flowing organization.

That doesn't mean that the Ushers' Corps is designed to take the individuality out of any of the young men. On the contrary, each one is selected carefully because of some definite personal trait. If you have any doubts, stop and ask a few questions of them while you're there. You'll find that each one is on his way some place—usually to the top.

STOP and talk to George Coyle—Georgie, he's called. If you're a boxing fan, you'll know Georgie's name instantly, although the chances are that you would find it more difficult to recognize him in his uniform. He doesn't look the same as he did that night in Chicago when he clinched the flyweight title in the Golden Gloves Amateur Boxing tournament. And the fierce scowl he wore when he climbed into the ring a few weeks later at Madison Square Garden to defend his title against the invading British challenger is conspicuous by its absence when he is suggesting that you try looking for seats along Aisle 4.

Georgie is a good typical usher, Mr. McHale says. A graduate of a trade school in Yonkers, N. Y., he is a skilled automobile mechanic. He is ushering because he wants to use his engineering ability to better effect than working in a garage—having something to do with the tremendously intricate backstage mechanical system at the Music Hall is more his speed. In spite of his scant twenty years, Georgie knows what he wants. And he's in a pretty good spot to get it!

Meanwhile, his boxing is a hobby. He started scrapping about two years ago, taking part in the trade-school matches, but it was plain to every one—especially to the unlucky lads who found themselves in the ring with Georgie—that he had a certain class that spelled "champion."

He still keeps in trim, although the amateur bouts for this year are pretty well out of the way. He gives boxing lessons to his fellow "aisle pounders" while they are off duty, working out either in their sumptuous club-room quarters or up on the Music Hall roof, seven stories above Manhattan's busy streets, where he is ever the center of attraction for bevies of beautiful Music Hall chorines, singers and dancers.

THEN there's Jimmy—James Michael Meehan—blond, blue-eyed, slim, nineteen-year-old Jimmy. There's a career ahead for him, too. Regularly, every couple of weeks, somebody gets on a train in some distant spot and comes to New York just to see Jimmy Meehan. You could walk right past him and never notice anything unusual about him. But, wait!

There was that fellow from North Carolina, for instance. Jimmy couldn't, right offhand, remember the fellow's name. The fellow from North Carolina came up to New York because his baseball team wasn't so good in spring practice this year. What the fellow wanted was a pitcher that could win games for him. He asked Jimmy how about it, but Jimmy said, no, he didn't think he was ready just yet. So the fellow from North Carolina went back home, and Jimmy kept on finding seats for people.

It all started when Jimmy was going to St. James High school in Brooklyn. He pitched for his team three years in a row, and was picked by coaches and sports writers as the greatest scholastic pitcher each of those three years. Professional baseball scouts began turning out for his games, watching him with critical eyes, waiting for him to blow up and prove to their own satisfaction that there isn't any such thing as a seasoned youngster when it comes to pitching.

But they watched through three years of Jimmy's baseball career and still couldn't find a flaw.

Offers began coming in. The New York Giants thought they could use him. The International League was represented in the bidding by the Rochester team. Other teams all over the East liked the idea of putting blue-eyed Jimmy Meehan into their uniforms.

But, by that time, Jimmy was in a different kind of uniform, treading briskly along carpeted aisles, pointing out seats (always pointing across the body, never with the arm nearest the designated spot) and telling you—if you asked him—that the show would be over at 7:52. He says he likes it.

Of course, that doesn't mean that he has given up baseball. If you have any doubts about that, just check up with some of the ushers in other New York City theaters. "Jimmy Meehan?" they'll say. "I wish he *would* give up baseball. Gosh! He pitched against our team last July—each theater's got its own team of ushers, you know—and licked the pants off us!"

He won ten of his eleven games for the Music Hall this past season. He's willing to continue pitching for the Music Hall for a while, yet. He likes the rest of the fellows he works with, and he's sure of his job. He's not as sure that he could make the grade this year in professional baseball. But in a couple of years—that will be a different story!

CHARLIE CUNNINGHAM, Oscar Carrera, Steven Stumph, Felix Matthews, Harry Oliver—some more of the boys. There isn't a prize-fighter or a baseball player in the lot, but they stand out above the crowd of average youngsters of their age. They're all interested in art or advertising. Harry's the boy that was caught doing a sketch of Katherine Hepburn one day while he was lounging around in the clubroom.

He thought it was pretty good. Not just exactly as good as he would be able to do in a couple of years, after some more lessons in his time off. But pretty good, anyway. That's why he was a little sore about somebody's taking it while he wasn't looking.

Another reason he didn't like it was because it's against the code for ushers to take stuff belonging to their fellow ushers. It looked bad. Harry made up his mind to keep quiet, and just watch; some day, surely, he'd catch the guy that stole his Katherine Hepburn away.

He did. He found the guy on the same day that Miss Hepburn was visiting the Music Hall on one of her New York trips. The guy—Mr. McHale again; there's no telling where Mr. McHale is liable to pop up, when his boys are concerned—sent for Harry, introduced him to Miss Hepburn, and then produced the missing portrait.

"Mr. Oliver did this," he said to the star, with a touch of fatherly pride in his voice. (Incidentally, in the presence of outsiders, the Music Hall ushers and pages are always "Mister.") "I think he'd appreciate it if you would autograph it for him. How about it, Mr. Oliver?"

Harry Oliver managed to choke a "Gosh! I'll say so!" down to an "If you would care to, Miss Hepburn——" And so it came to pass that Harry's bedroom at home was adorned with a handsome and unmistakably autographed drawing of Katherine Hepburn. But that wasn't the important thing to Harry. Not to hear him tell it. According to Harry, "It was the biggest relief in the world to know that none of the other fellows swiped it!"

That's the way those fellows are. They don't care so much about money. They're not keen on forcing their ways to the top of any ladders before they are sure they can stay there. Level-headedness, the willingness to be of service, and ambition are their most outstanding traits, And you'll find it so throughout the Corps.

MOONLIGHT on the PRAIRIE

He risked his life to save the widow of the man they said he killed—and to prove to her that he hadn't!

"ACE" ANDREWS knocked "Buck" Cantwell down. The cattle range shyster's shoulders thudded in the dust of Wagon Wheel's straggling street. The blow was delivered with all of Ace's lean, rawhide body behind it.

Buck Cantwell swore viciously. He rolled over, dragging his Colt. Before he could get the six-gun into action, the cowpuncher's booted toe cracked his wrist. The weapon flew to one side.

"Now you can't shoot me in the back," drawled Ace Andrews.

He turned his cool, gray eyes on a woman who was little more than a trembling girl. Beside her stood a brown-eyed, chubby boy of five or so.

The girl was Mrs. Barbara Roberts, widow of "Butch" Roberts. She was the mother of the boy, but seemed too young for the part.

"Oh!" gasped the young woman. "He said you murdered Butch!"

"That's why I hit him," smiled Ace Andrews grimly. "Please believe I didn't kill Butch. The same rascals that are trying to keep you off your ranch murdered your husband."

"But why does he accuse you?" murmured Barbara Roberts.

"To keep you from going out to Bar-B ranch with me," said Ace.

"I don't know what to do," said the young widow distractedly. "I have no choice—I've got to go with you. We must be there before midnight or Dickie loses all of his inheritance."

"Reckon I know all that," stated Ace. "An' that's why Small Change an' me are ridin' herd on this outfit to see you get a square deal."

Buck Cantwell, the fat-jowled range attorney, stumbled away, muttering. He was holding his jaw. It felt as if a mule had kicked him.

" 'Low this Cantwell's out to stir up some trouble dust," said a weazened little fellow wearing hairy chaps. "Maybe we'd best be high-tailin' outta here, Ace."

This was "Small Change," Ace's queer, range-dried partner. They had come to Wagon Wheel together after a Wild West

THE CAST

A fictionization of the motion picture of the same title.

DICK FORAN	"Ace" Andrews
George E. Stone	"Small Change"
Dickie Jones	Dickie Roberts
Sheila Mannors	Barbara Roberts
Joseph Sawyer	Luke Thomas

Story and scenario by William Jacobs.

Directed by D. Ross Lederman.

A WARNER BROTHERS PICTURE

show had collapsed. Small Change had been known as "Zeno." He could escape from any kind of a rope tie.

The total assets of Ace and Small Change consisted of "Smoke," the glossy black gelding that seemed almost human; a tough little paint pony, and "Midge," a diminutive burro. The latter two animals had been all Ace and Small Change had salvaged in lieu of wages from the show.

Smoke, the gelding, was Ace's own personal property.

These mounts apparently were the only transportation available to Barbara Roberts and her small son. The mother and the boy had arrived at Wagon Wheel by stage. The Bar-B ranch lay twenty-eight miles through the badland hills.

Even "Pop" Powell, the good-natured livery stable man, had refused to convey Mrs. Roberts and the boy to Bar-B.

"They'll never reach the ranch alive," Pop Powell had advised Ace Andrews. "When Butch Roberts was shot to death he had made a will. The girl couldn't put up with his brutality. She'd taken the kid East. Butch fixed it so the kid would have to come back to the ranch or lose every head of beef and every acre."

"How'd he do that?" had been Ace's question.

"Simple as a plain loop," explained Pop Powell. "His will says the kid must live on the ranch until he's twenty-one. An' the kid must be on the ranch not later than thirty days after Butch is planted. Otherwise, the Bar-B goes to Butch's foreman, Luke Thomas."

"An' where does Buck Cantwell fit in?" Ace had inquired.

"Seein' he drawed up the will, he knows all about it," stated Pop. "When Butch was killed, an' you went an' joined up with that show, it was rumored you done the shootin' of Butch, Ace. Butch was beatin' a hoss at the time, an' you an' him had had a run-in over the same thing before."

Ace Andrews had seen clearly. No doubt but Buck Cantwell and Luke Thomas were in cahoots. He had learned Luke Thomas had given warning that anybody bringing Butch's kid to the Bar-B would not get back to Wagon Wheel alive.

Dickie looked wisely at the two figures.

So Ace had made his offer to ride with Barbara Roberts and her boy Dickie to Bar-B. And in the young widow's presence, Buck Cantwell had accused him of being her husband's murderer.

But if Ace thought he could get rid of the scheming lawyer so easily, he was greatly mistaken. No sooner had Ace mounted Barbara and her boy on an extra horse which Pop Powell had provided, than Buck Cantwell returned, and with him was a tall, rangy man.

"Stick 'em up, you two!" ordered Buck's companion.

"Sheriff Gibney!" muttered Pop Powell. "I figgered that's what would happen!"

"An' what's the idea?" said Ace, lifting his hands.

"Cantwell charges you with the murder of Butch Roberts," stated the sheriff. "You two will have to come with me."

Barbara Roberts was bewildered. Buck Cantwell smiled evilly and strode away toward his office.

"Sorry, Mrs. Roberts," said Ace. "I won't be able to go with you. But you follow the trail over the Divide and keep goin'."

"Thank you," said the girl stiffly. "I'll return your horses."

"That's all right, ma'am," said Ace. He patted the boy's shoulder. "Good-by, Dickie—take care of your mother."

"Come on, you two!" rapped Sheriff Gibney.

ACE ANDREWS faced Sheriff Gibney in the office of the small adobe jail. The sheriff scowled with a puzzled air.

"Sheriff," said Ace, "it's a trick to keep me from takin' Mrs. Roberts to the Bar-B."

"Ace, I know you didn't kill Butch," said the sheriff slowly. "But Buck's a power politically. There's an election comin'."

"That makes it a sweet frame-up!" declared Ace.

"Nothin' I can do about it, boys," grinned Sheriff Gibney. "Get in that cell. I'm goin' fishin'. May be gone quite a spell."

The cell door slammed. Sheriff Gibney stalked out.

"I'm not rottin' here while them cowardly murderers rob a defenseless woman!" raged Ace. "We've got to do something!"

Small Change was looking at the door of the cell. The lock had not caught. The Law of Basin County seemed a mite careless.

"I'd say that fella's a danged smart sheriff," Small Change grinned.

Two minutes later they were outside and swinging onto their horses. At a nearby corner, Sheriff Gibney saw them go.

"Well, I'll be hornswoggled, if they didn't escape," he muttered.

There was no pursuit as Ace and Small Change struck the rocky trail over the Divide. They rapidly overtook the two riders following the dangerous narrow trail. Barbara Roberts and Dickie were riding along a narrow shelf when Ace let out a yell.

"The dirty coyotes!"

"Looks like they've got 'em!" groaned Small Change.

The gelding Smoke was running with his ears flat. Ahead of the partners a rock slide rolled down with the roar of a blast. The figures of the woman and boy were blotted out. It seemed the two were directly in the pathway of the avalanche.

On the hill above three riders spurred their horses away—Buck Cantwell and two others.

"That got 'em, Red," Buck said to one of his companions. "That cleans it up."

But Red was looking down the trail.

"Pipe that, Boss," he said. "Ain't that Ace Andrews?"

Buck Cantwell swore heavily. "Busted jail, sure as hell! Let him have it, Red! He's a fugitive from justice!"

Ace and Small Change had not seen

the riders above the slide—not until a .30-30 flattened on the granite wall close to Ace's head. High on the hill above a blue puff of smoke curled from a rifle.

The quick-witted Ace rolled from his saddle. As his limp body struck, he cautioned, "It's a good play to be dead, Small Change."

On the hill, Red gloated. "Got him, boss! What about the gal? The slide missed her an' the kid!"

"We'll take care of her," grated Buck. "We'll get to the ranch."

AT the ranch, Luke Thomas was already preparing a new trap. His men had reported that Ace Andrews had not been killed—in fact, that Ace Andrews and Small Change had caught up with Barbara and her boy, and were even now leading them along a different trail to the ranch.

Small Dickie was riding ahead on Midge, the donkey. He was riding proudly, like any small boy of five would. Ace and Small Change were following with Barbara Roberts. The mother's lovely face wore a look of worry.

"I'm terribly nervous about Dickie, riding ahead," she said.

"Nothing can happen to him down here," assured Ace.

Then a low rumbling started up a wash ahead. It quickly increased to steady thunder. Echoes rolled from the granite cliffs.

"What's it sound like to you?" said Small Change.

"Hell's broke loose some place," replied Ace, reining in.

"Hellamighty!" broke from Small Change. "It's hosses!"

Ace swore under his breath. "Wild

The cattle range shyster's shoulders thudded in the dust.

horse stampede!" he grated. "Take Mrs. Roberts up the bank! I'm going after Dickie!"

Small Change caught Barbara's bridle. Despite her protest, he pulled her paint pony toward the steep incline.

Smoke scarcely needed a word and a touch. His powerful body seemed to flatten. Ace lay low over the horse, tense with anxiety.

For the first of the wave of wild horses were flowing into the narrow wash. The crushing pack, a hundred broad and many hundred deep, bore down upon the halted donkey like an avalanche.

Dickie turned a white, scared face. All of the wash was filled with the flood of ponding hoofs. Ace was running Smoke crossways of the stampede. He could almost feel the snorting, hot breaths of the maddened animals.

Midge, the donkey, was terror-stricken. He reared and Dickie was pitched over his head. The child lay still, blood seeping from a cut over one eye.

Few riders could have duplicated Ace Andrews' feat. His long body bent down. One leg was hooked over the saddle horn. The first of the plunging wild horses were almost touching the flying Smoke as Ace scooped the boy into his steel-strong arms.

Above, forced to safety by Small Change, Barbara covered her eyes and moaned.

"Dickie! Oh, Dickie! Why did we come?"

"We 'low to keep them thievin' side-winders from stealin' the Bar-B ranch," said Small Change laconically. "Lookit, Mrs. Roberts!"

The powerful Smoke was climbing an almost perpendicular bank. In Ace's arms snuggled the small form of the unconscious Dickie.

In a few minutes, Dickie opened his eyes. His mother's relief was great—but new fear came when she realized that more traps might lie in wait for them; traps that they might not avoid. It was only because of this realization that she allowed Ace Andrews to follow his plan of racing ahead with Dickie, hoping to reach the ranch before midnight and saving the boy's heritage.

THE big room of the Bar-B ranch house reeked with fumes of whisky. Buck Cantwell and Luke Thomas were draining their fourth bottle.

"Four more minutes an' the whole damn' spread is mine," gloated the red-eyed Luke.

"You mean your'n an' mine," suggested Buck.

Luke glared at the lawyer, but he mumbled, "Yeah—your'n an' mine."

Now the big clock showed three minutes until midnight.

"Funny—what could o' happened to them after the stampede," said Buck. "Pete said he couldn't find a single trace of 'em."

"Ho! Ho!" laughed Luke Thomas thickly. "Them crazy broncs must o' stamped 'em right into the bed o' the wash!"

Buck Cantwell glanced at the big clock. The pendulum ticked.

"Only two minutes more," he gloated. "Let's open another quart!"

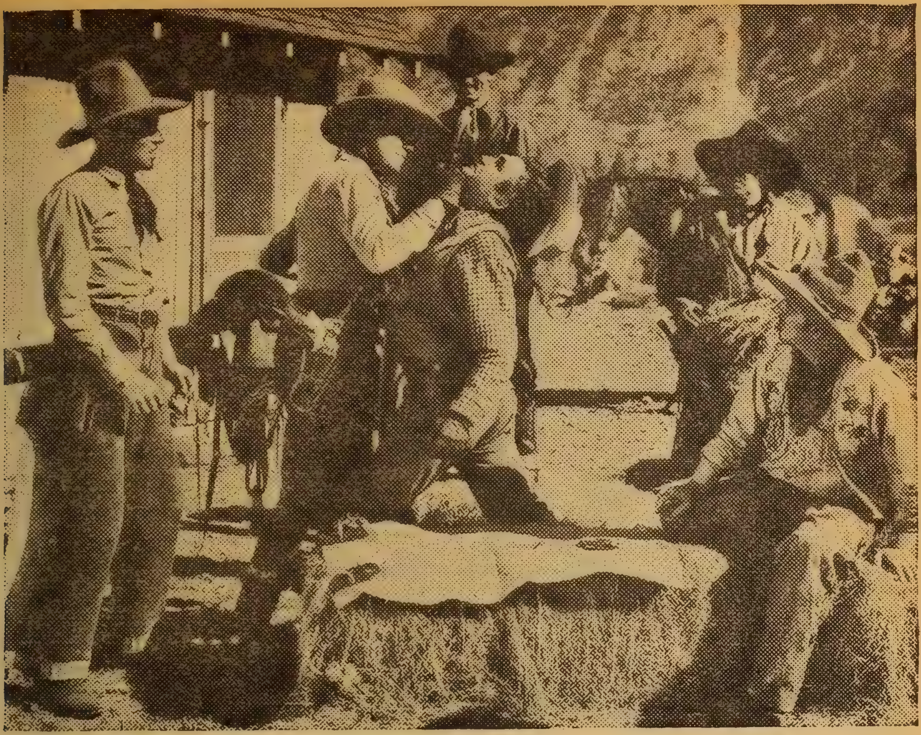
But before he could reach the bottle the door was almost splintered by a terrific kick. It snapped open. Ace Andrews stood there with a rolled blanket in his arms.

Buck and Luke staggered to their feet. Their eyes were bleary.

"What the hell—Ace Andrews! Well whadda y' want here?" grunted Buck belligerently. "Whadda y' got wrapped in that blanket?"

The blanket opened in Ace's arms. A sleepy small boy rubbed his eyes and looked around wonderingly.

"Get out, you coyotes!" rapped Ace. "But before you go—meet the new boss of the Bar-B!"



Pete got his chin in the way of a smashing uppercut.

THE new boss of the Bar-B was still badly bruised from his experience beneath the stampeding horses when Ace, taking charge of the spread, uncovered more trouble. The record books showed four thousand head, while only a thousand were on the ground. It called for a showdown, and Ace strode into a group of idling cowhands to get it.

"Who's ramrod on this spread when Luke Thomas is gone?" demanded Ace.

"Reckon I am—who wants to know?" snarled a flat-faced cow-puncher, called Pete.

"We're three thousan' shy on the beef, that's why," stated Ace.

"Rustlers has been whittlin' 'em down," growled Pete. "The spread's too big for the hands we've got."

"That's right," grunted a chorus, as the other punchers ranged themselves alongside Pete.

"I think something could be done about it," spoke a quiet voice.

The speaker was a slim youngster. Then he added his name was Jeff.

"Well, why hasn't it been done?" demanded Ace.

"I've only been here a month," said Jeff. "I don't think Luke Thomas wanted missing cows reported."

"I get you," gritted Ace. "All right, cowpokes! Get your saddle rolls! We won't be needin' you around here any more!"

Ace's back was turned to Pete. Pete's gun whipped into his hand, aimed at Ace's retreating back. But the voice of Small Change, his six-gun in hand, halted Pete's trigger finger.

Ace whirled on Pete. "I'll give you a break, cowlouse! I'm takin' off my hardware! We'll see who stays, you or me!"

The guns of the cowboy Jeff and Small Change covered the other riders. Pete outweighed Ace Andrews. They slugged toe to toe. Then Pete seemed to get his chin in the way of a smashing uppercut.

Ten minutes later, the cowhand gunmen of Luke Thomas were riding off. Ace turned to the slim cowboy, Jeff.

"What were you doing with these cutthroats?" he questioned.

"Cattlemen's Association," grinned Jeff, showing a card.

Then Jeff said he believed Luke Thomas had the missing cattle in Dark Canyon near his homestead.

"I'm going to town for riders," announced Ace. "We'll drive them cows home. I'll ride the paint. If anything happens, send Smoke for me."

IN less than three hours, something did happen. Barbara Roberts held an arrow in her slender hands. She looked at the brown-eyed Dickie and her firm lips pressed in a tight line.

A note had been wrapped around the arrow.

"Be off the Bar-B to-morrow or we're smokin' you out."

Jeff, the slim cowboy, said, "They're goin' to burn you out."

Pete had fired that arrow. He now was riding swiftly away.

"What am I to do?" said the distracted girl.

"Wait till Ace gets back from town, ma'am," grinned Jeff. "He ain't the kind to let 'em get away with it."

"But he may not get back in time, Jeff."

Brown-eyed Dickie had been listening. The child smiled and slipped away toward the horse corral.

Little Dickie had opened the gate of the horse corral. The glossy Smoke nuzzled the boy's hand.

"Go get Ace and Small Change," commanded the child.

Smoke tossed his head. The wise horse understood.

But on the trail to Wagon Wheel Luke Thomas was riding with the evil Pete. Luke yelled, "There's Ace Andrews' horse! Rope him!"

Smoke was trapped. Luke Thomas laughed raucously. He slapped his own saddle on the shining black. Smoke's nostrils dilated as the man swung to his back. None but Ace had ever ridden him.

Five seconds later, Luke lay flat on his back, yelling, "Don't let the ornery brute get away!"

But the wise Smoke was showing his heels down the trail. That horse was "going to town," with Luke's best saddle—to town, and to Ace who stood, with eight clean-looking riders, at Pop Powell's livery stable.

"Smoke!" shouted Ace. "You old

Ace Andrews headed the sheriff's posse that rode toward Luke's hideaway.

son-of-a-gun! Fellows, there's hell poppin' at the Bar-B! C'mon, let's ride!"

CALVES were bellowing in a basin on the Bar-B. Ace, Jeff and Small Change slid from their horses. Half a dozen rustlers were putting a new brand on Bar-B calves.

"Two thieves apiece," chortled Small Change. "It's a set-up."

"Fire over their heads," instructed Ace. "Give them a chance."

This was somewhat of a mistake. Pete, Luke's righthand man, was leading the branders. At his order they whipped into the rocks. Their guns blazed. Ace, Jeff and Small Change were forced to flatten on the rim above. Lead sang wickedly around them.

"Take your time," said Ace quietly. "They can't get out. Let 'em have it when they move."

The rustlers' guns continued to blast away at the rim. Below the rim ran a narrow trail. Ace was looking along this path when he groaned loudly.

"Good gosh! It's Dickie on the Shetland!"

Ace had bought the kid a pony. Unknown to his mother, Dickie had started to follow Ace to Dark Canyon. Now the boy was riding slowly along the trail. His pony was heading directly into the rustlers' line of fire.

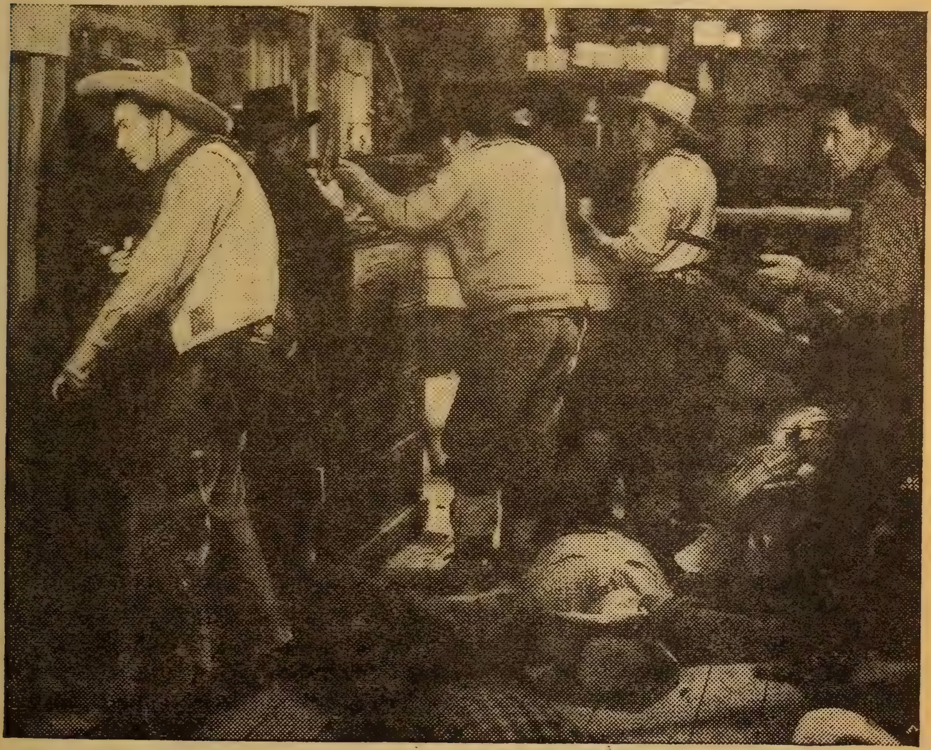
"Ace! Ace!" called out Dickie. "You up there?"

"Holy smoke!" exploded Ace. "Dickie! Go back! Go back!"

"The kid'll get it sure," groaned Jeff. "Dickie, go home!"

"If them coyotes would only hold off for a minute," said Ace.

But Dickie on his Shetland was smiling happily. Dust spurted from bullets



A dozen men were barricaded behind the doors and windows.

around him. This was lots of fun. He whooped.

Ace pulled a white handkerchief from his pocket.

"Sorry, fellows, but we've got to save the kid," he said grimly. "Nothin' to do but put up the white flag."

Pete yelled from below, "He's showin' a white flag! All right, damn' yuh! Throw down your guns!"

With lifted hands, Ace, Jeff and Small Change walked down the slope. Ace ordered Dickie to go home.

"No you don't!" rasped Pete. "Luke'll be damn' glad to see the kid as well as the rest o' you cocky hombres!"

Ace and his men were herded on foot ahead of the rustlers. Ace had only one faint hope. He had sent one of his riders to Wagon Wheel before starting to explore Dark Canyon. A message had gone to Sheriff Gibney, telling him it might be well to assemble the vigilantes and ride to the Bar-B.

But hope of rescue faded when Ace, Small Change and Jeff stood with their hands tied behind them in the hideaway of Luke Thomas. The drunken ex-foreman of the Bar-B grinned gloatingly.

"Well, look what we caught," he mouthed. "Where's the kid, Pete?"

"Put him in the corn crib like you said."

"That's right," said Luke. "Wouldn't want his innocent eyes to see what I'm goin' to do to these rats. I've got other ideas for him."

Luke got up and walked toward Ace. A rawhide lash hung from his wrist. He slapped it viciously across Ace's face. Ace went white, but he did not wince.

"You drunken buzzard!" shouted Jeff. "You wouldn't do that if he wasn't tied!"

"Keep your mouth shut," gritted Ace.

Luke Thomas screwed his eyes to points, looking at Jeff.

"What's that?" he slavered. "I think I'll take care of you right now, Mr. Cattlemen's Association! You ain't been foolin' nobody!"

Ace and Small Change groaned helplessly. Luke's six-gun jumped twice in his hand. Jeff smiled loyally at Ace, but his knees buckled. Blood oozed from his mouth. His eyes slowly glazed. Jeff was dead.

"Now, Pete," ordered Luke, "take these hombres an' hog-tie 'em in the bunk-house! Have 'em watched! They're slippery fish!"

Luke pulled on his gauntlets and started out of the door.

"I'm ridin' over to Bar-B, Pete. I'll bring her nibs back an' let her watch me hang these two interferin' monkeys from the highest tree on the range."

ACE and Small Change lay together in a small room of the bunk house. They had been hog-tied hand and foot.

"Looks like it's the last round-up, partner," said Ace. "I wouldn't mind so much, if it wasn't for her an' the kid."

Small Change had been squirming in the ropes holding him. He rolled to Ace.

"They didn't call me Zeno in the circus for nothin'," he whispered. "Ace, I'm loose."

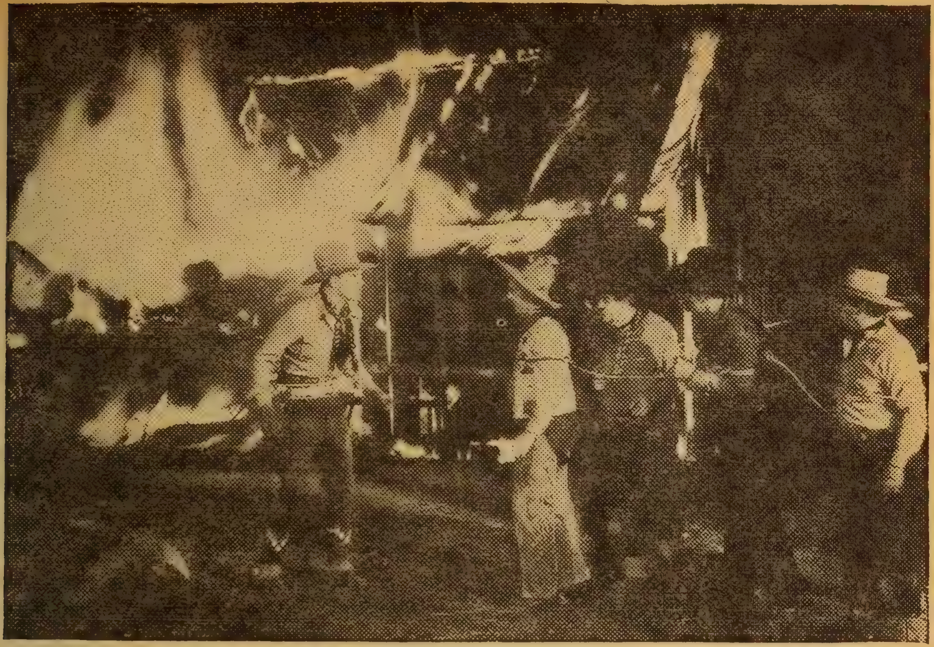
"Boy, that's something!" exulted Ace. "Good old Zeno!"

Small Change was on his feet. In a few seconds Ace was free. Small Change said, "You beat it for help, an' I'll stick by the gang. I can fool 'em when they look in. I'll be here when you get back with the boys."

Luke's gunmen, drinking and playing cards outside, were confident Ace and Small Change were safely tied. But Ace had left Small Change tied loosely. Now he was coming from the corn crib. Dickie was a small, limp bundle in his arms.

Ace whistled softly. In the horse corral a big black lifted his head. It was Smoke. Ace whistled again. Smoke was hitched to a rail. But at the second whistle he untied the rope with his teeth and came trotting over.

Ace swung into the saddle. Smoke took the trail with the speed of an arrow.



"Is Small Change in there?" he demanded. . . . The whole place had become a blazing furnace.

BUCK CANTWELL faced Barbara Roberts across the ranch house table. The girl was frantic with grief and worry. Since afternoon the riders had been combing the hills unsuccessfully for little Dickie.

The boy's Shetland pony had come home riderless.

Night shrouded the Bar-B ranch house. The sudden appearance of the pudgy lawyer from Wagon Wheel had been a complete surprise.

"I'm a man of few words, Mrs. Roberts—Barbara," said Buck Cantwell. "I'm out here to-night to offer you my hand in marriage. You need my protection from the worst cut-throat in the Southwest. He is menacin' your life and property."

Buck would not have spoken so freely if he had known Luke Thomas had ridden up. Luke now was standing just outside an open window. He kicked the door open and strode in.

"You talkin' about me, Buck, you mangy coyote?" rasped Luke.

Buck stammered a quick denial. Barbara attempted to slip from the room.

"Wait a minute, you!" snapped Luke. "Where you goin'?"

"I'm worried about Dickie. He's missing."

"Dickie's all right," sneered Luke. "He's down at my place. Nothin' will happen to him if you do jist as I tell yuh."

"What—what—what do you want?" pleaded Barbara.

"You'll just sign a little paper givin' me half o' this ranch," said Luke.

Outside, Ace Andrews slid from Smoke's saddle. He set Dickie on the ground.

"Run to the bunk house an' tell the boys to come here right away, Dickie," said Ace in a low voice.

Ace stood by the ranch house door. Dickie came back from the bunk house.

"There ain't anybody there, Ace," he whispered.

Inside the house Luke's voice was strident.

"I don't care how much you beg—they ain't anything you can say will save Ace Andrews' neck——"

Then came Barbara's agonized voice, "You let Dickie and Ace go and I'll sign anything you say. I'll give you the ranch."

"You hear that, Buck!" snapped Luke. "Make out a paper!"

Ace Andrews loomed in the door. He was holding a weapon in his hand, though his guns had been taken.

"Stick 'em up—both of you!" he rapped out.

Buck and Luke obeyed the order. At Ace's command they were putting their own six-guns on the table. Dickie had run to his mother's arms. The small boy chattered excitedly.

"Look, Mommie—Ace is holdin' 'em up with my toy pistol!"

Luke snarled an oath. Seeing the toy pistol, he lunged for Ace. Barbara snatched the holsters of the guns on the table and heaved them through the window.

Luke and Ace had rolled into a snarl of thrashing fists. Buck attempted to sneak quietly from the door. Ace freed himself and heaved to his feet. One rawboned fist laid the lawyer on his face.

But Luke had hurled a chair. It knocked Ace to one side and went through the window. Luke was a powerful man. He was on Ace, hammering with his fists. His knee banged into Ace's stomach.

Despite his strength, Ace was beaten to the floor. There he pulled Luke close to his breast. That way he got back to his feet. Fast rights and lefts crashed into Luke's stomach and chin.

Luke Thomas groaned and fell across Buck's limp body.

Horses pounded into the yard. Boots clumped across the porch.

"Hello, Ace!" boomed the voice of Sheriff Gibney.

"Just in time, sheriff!" panted Ace. "You can arrest Buck Cantwell for the murder of Butch Roberts—and Luke Thomas for the killing of Jeff Holt."

ACE ANDREWS headed the sheriff's posse that rode toward Luke's Dark Canyon hideaway. As the riders strung down the slope toward the low structure in which Luke Thomas had holed up his gunmen, Sheriff Gibney issued an order.

"Dismount and string out! Surround the pole-cats! This time we'll have a real cleanin' up in Basin County!"

Rifle fire knifed from the building. Apparently a dozen men were barricaded behind the doors and windows. The voice of Pete indicated the cowboy aide to Luke Thomas was in command.

"We can't root 'em out this way," announced Sheriff Gibney. "It would take all night."

"Let's rush 'em, sheriff," suggested Ace.

"No," announced Sheriff Gibney. "I'm smokin' 'em out."

"Sheriff," said Ace, "my pal, Small Change Turner, is in that house. I don't want anything to happen to him."

"Small Change'll get out all right," assured the sheriff.

Ace was dubious of this. The posse mounted single file. Their horses charged the building. Each man carried a flaming pine knot torch. The flares were hurled through the windows. But they were as quickly tramped out by the men inside.

Then a voice shouted from the hill above the house. Some of the posse had found a loaded hay wagon. Fire was struck and the wagon was converted into a mass of flame. It was started running down the hill.

Lead sang like a swarm of bees. But the blazing wagon crashed into the tinder-dry shack. Tongues of fire shot toward the sky.

"Come out, with your hands up!" yelled Sheriff Gibney.

Led by Pete, a dozen of Luke's killers appeared. Their hands were empty. Ace caught Pete by the shoulder and whirled him around.

"Is Small Change in there?" he demanded.

"Yeah!" snarled the sullen Pete. "I guess he is!"

Sheriff Gibney attempted to grab Ace, but he was too late. With an arm over his eyes, Ace darted toward the blazing building. But his valiant effort was blocked. The building collapsed with a crackling roar. The whole place had become a furnace. Ace covered his face and walked slowly back up the hill.

"Too bad about Small Change," muttered Sheriff Gibney. "I feel like it was my fault."

"He was my best friend, sheriff," said Ace in a low tone. "I'll never get over this."

BACK at the Bar-B, little Dickie made a dash for Ace. The lanky cowboy had entered dejectedly, his hat in his hand.

"What's the matter, Ace?" bubbled the child. "Didn't you ketched 'em?"

"Yeah, we caught them all right," said Ace slowly. "You're the top boss now of the Bar-B, Dickie."

"You look worn out, Ace," said Barbara. "Come into the kitchen and we'll have coffee."

Ace followed her, but his face was grimly set.

"I've got bad news, Mrs. Roberts," he said. "Poor old Small Change——"

Ace halted abruptly in the kitchen door. Lee, the Chinaman, was grinning broadly.

"Havee some more bliscuits, Smallee Change?"

Small Change sat there stuffing food into his mouth. He looked up with a sheepish grin.

"'Lo, Ace—come on an' have some chow!" he greeted.

"You consarned old tumble-weed!" roared Ace. "How'd you get here?"

"Oh, that," grinned Small Change. "I figgered you wouldn't need me, so I untied myself an' come on home. I was hungry."

THREE riders halted on the rim of the mountain. The straight figure of Ace Andrews loomed beside the slender loveliness of Barbara Roberts. Beside them Dickie, the undisputed boss of the Bar-B, sat on his Shetland pony like a small king of the range.

"You're no longer afraid of the West—afraid of what it might do to Dickie?" said Ace soberly.

"No—not any more," said the girl softly. "I only hope it will make him as fine and as brave as—Ace Andrews."

"H'm!" growled Ace. "Nice of you to put it that way—I mean—I was about to say——"

Ace fumbled awkwardly. He managed to get Barbara's slim hand.

"I mean—for a month I—I—doggone it, Barbara! I want you to marry me! Whew! I got that out!"

"Marry you?" said Barbara slowly. "I'll have to ask Dickie. Dickie, Ace has asked me to let him be your new daddy—what do you think about it?"

Dickie's brown eyes regarded Ace solemnly.

"Well," he said, "I guess maybe we do need a foreman down at Bar-B."

Barbara's clear eyes smiled at Ace.

"Dickie," said Ace. "Looks like there's some cows over there stuck in the mud. You'd better ride over and see."

In a minute Dickie returned, his Shetland pony prancing.

"Well, did you see them?" questioned Ace.

Dickie looked wisely sideways at the two figures so close together.

"Naw," he said, "I didn't see any cows, but I heard one pull its feet outta the mud."

Death from a Distance

A light millions of years old accuses the killer of Professor Stone

THE jagged, spurting flash of orange-red burst from the darkness of the planetarium room in the Trowbridge Observatory and disappeared in the thunderous roar of a gun exploding.

There was a muffled groan, a gutteral gasp of death. After that only a stunned silence from the audience, gathered to hear the lecture of the famous Professor Ernst Einfield.

The only light in the room came from the floor, flooding the dome ceiling that represented a sky. The audience sat in a shadowy darkness, while the professor stood in front of them, silhouetted like a ghostly thing of black.

For a few ghastly seconds, a stunned silence remained. It was broken by an hysterical scream, and then the planetarium room was a bedlam of hysterical women and shouting men.

Professor Trowbridge, astronomer in charge of the observatory, was on his feet shouting orders to Jim Gray, the watchman, to lock the door.

Gray did this and then turned the lights on. The audience gasped in horror as they stared at the body of Professor Frederick Stone, well-known manufacturer of anæsthetics, sitting in his chair, eyes staring blankly in death at the star-covered ceiling. A blotch of crimson had formed on his shirt over the heart.

And lying on the floor near the dead man was the revolver used to kill him!

"Call the police, Jim," Trowbridge ordered his watchman, "and lock the door when you go out. Not a person is to leave this room!"

DETECTIVE MALLORY, cruising the district with Detective Regan, received the radio message of the murder, and five minutes later he and Regan entered the Trowbridge Observatory and knocked on the door of the planetarium room.

Trowbridge himself opened the door, but as he did a young woman, face pale and eyes flashing with excitement, rushed out, colliding against Detective Regan, sending him sprawling against the wall.

"Wait a minute," Mallory said to the girl. "What's your name? And why the great big rush?"

"Don't bother me," the girl answered curtly. "I'm Kay Palmer from the *Post Chronicle* and I'm trying to get out to phone my paper."

"Phone your paper if you have to, but don't leave this building," Mallory replied. "I want to talk to you later."

Kay Palmer disappeared down the corridor for the main office of the observatory; Mallory and Regan entered the planetarium.

The lights were on, and the audience were huddled like frightened sheep in a far corner. Doctor Stone's body remained in the chair, slumped forward a little, his eyes open in death. The murder gun lay at his feet, just as it had been found when the lights were turned on.

"I—I—don't know what happened," Trowbridge explained to Mallory. "Professor Einfield was lecturing on the Arcturus—the star, you know. Then there was a shot. We turned on the lights, and—and——"

Mallory's eyes went over the room quickly, taking in every detail.

"Are you sure," he said to Trowbridge, "that nobody left after the shot was fired?"

"I am certain," Trowbridge replied. "Jim Gray, the watchman, locked the door before turning the lights on."

Mallory turned to Gray, a middle-aged man, with a frank face that was pale with fright.

"I—I—was standing near the door," Gray explained. "Nobody went past me—and there isn't any other door to the room."

Two policemen, accompanied by Doctor Ross, the medical examiner, and a fingerprint man from headquarters, appeared at the door. Mallory nodded toward the body in the chair and the doctor began his examination, while the fingerprint expert carefully picked up the

THE CAST

RUSSELL HOPTON	Ted Mallory
LOLA LANE	Kay Palmer
John St. Polis	Prof. Trowbridge
Lee Kohlmar	Prof. Einfield
Lew Kelly	Detective Regan
Wheeler Oakman	Langsdale
George Marion, Sr.	Jim Gray
Robert Frazer	Morgan
Cornelius Keefe	Gorman
John Davidson	Haidru Ahmad

A fictionization of the First Division Picture of the same title.

AN INVINCIBLE PRODUCTION

gun and sprinkled it with a white dust.

While this was going on, Mallory questioned Morgan, Trowbridge's electrician, and Langsdale, a second assistant. Neither had seen anyone move in the darkness just before the shot was fired.

Professor Einfield, stunned and almost speechless from the tragedy, said: "Herr Lieutenant, I was standing right here, facing the crowd. Many persons could have moved and I would not have seen them because I was looking up."

"Morgan," Mallory said to the light man, "you were operating the lights. Are you sure you saw nobody move?"

"I know I didn't."

The medical examiner completed his hurried examination of the body and said to Mallory: "The case is yours, Mallory. Doctor Stone was shot through the heart and killed instantly."

The fingerprint man added: "No fingerprints on the gun or body."

"Okay," Detective Mallory said. "You can have the body removed, Doc."

AS the doctor started out of the door for the stretcher men, Kay Palmer entered the room.

"Lieutenant," she said to Mallory. "I'm asking you, like a lady, will you please let me go back to my paper and write this story. It's the greatest break in my little life. If I write it myself, it means no more lectures for me. It means I'll get some real assignments."

Mallory looked at her, grinned, and shook his head.

"You'll have to stick around," he said. "Let somebody else cover himself with glory."

Kay flushed angrily, bit her lips.

"I'm warning you," she said. "This dirty trick you're playing on me is going to cost you some sleepless afternoons."

Mallory turned and faced the crowd.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he explained. "I'm sorry to cause you all this inconvenience, but one of you has committed a murder. I'm here to find out who it is. Will you please take the seats you were occupying when the shot was fired?"

Silently and nervously, the people filed to the seats they used when Doctor Stone was murdered.

"From the examination of the wound," Mallory continued, pointing to the south wall, "it would indicate that the shot came from that direction. The murderer must have moved very quietly into position to fire the fatal shot. After he fired it, he shoved the revolver across the floor near Doctor Stone's chair, and then crawled away again. Did anyone see a person moving from his seat just before the shot was fired?"

"Yes, I did!" a woman cried. "Someone got up over there and moved just before the shot was fired. I think it was a man."

But when Mallory tried to get a description of this man, he got the description of three or four different types. The words of the woman seemed to break the ice with the other members of the audience. Now, everybody remembered seeing someone move—yet no two agreed on how this person looked.

Mallory shrugged helplessly and turned to Trowbridge.

"These people are invited guests," Mallory said. "Do you know all of them?"

"All but one," Trowbridge answered quickly. "That man there. I never saw him before."

Mallory looked to where Trowbridge pointed out and saw a dark-faced Hindu. Mallory walked over to him and asked: "Did you have an invitation to come here tonight?"

"Naturally," the Hindu replied in a soft, well-modulated voice. "Otherwise I wouldn't have been here. My name, if you are interested, is Haidru Ahmad."

"Is that name on your list?" Mallory demanded of Trowbridge.

The huge telescope swung into place easily, guided by the professor's touch.

"It is not."

"Did you know," Mallory shot at Haidru Ahmad, "that Doctor Stone was coming here tonight?"

"Since I don't know him, why should I be interested. I——"

"That's a lie!" a voice shouted angrily.

MALLORY turned to the speaker and saw a young man.

"I am Clay Gorman," he said. "I was Doctor Stone's personal secretary."

"Why do you say this man is lying?"

"Because I heard Doctor Stone tell him he was coming here tonight," Gorman explained. "I heard a lot of other things, too. The doctor and this man quarreled over money matters. Haidru Ahmad phoned yesterday, demanding to see him and the doctor refused. I heard Ahmad tell Doctor Stone that he was going to kill him!"

"You came here," Mallory turned to Haidru Ahmad, "to kill Doctor Stone?"

Haidru Ahmad smiled coldly and said: "The truth is I did just that—but someone saved me the trouble."

Mallory motioned to Regan.

"See that this gentleman is escorted to headquarters," Mallory said. "I'll book him when I get down."

Regan took Haidru Ahmad from the room. Mallory told the guests that they could leave, but to keep themselves ready for a call at any time. They rushed from the room of death gladly.

"I don't want a thing, even a chair, in this room touched or moved," Mallory said to Trowbridge. "And I'd like to look over some facts about the stars on this ceiling."

"We have that information in my office," Trowbridge said.

Mallory followed him out of the room, but turned when Kay Palmer, who had remained, said: "I'm still waiting to be questioned."

Mallory turned, looked at her, his lean face loosing its tenseness.

"Oh, you!" he said. "Sure, I almost forgot you were here."

"All right. What about those questions you were going to ask me?"

"What are you doing tomorrow night?"

"Is that what you've kept me here all this time to ask?"

"That's all."

Kay walked up to him.

"Okay, Mallory," she said. "You beat me out of one story but tomorrow there will be one in the morning edition. I hope you like it!"

MALLORY read that story the next morning, in the office of the District Attorney. The paper lay across the District Attorney's desk. The headlines read:

POLICE FAIL IN SOLVING STONE MURDER

DETECTIVE MALLORY ADMITS INABILITY TO DO ANYTHING

"This," the District Attorney roared, "is a fine break for the police department! I thought you got along with reporters."

Mallory grimaced.

"This one," he answered, "happens to be a girl—and a bottle of very bad poison."

"Listen, Mallory," the D. A. said wearily, "this murder is dynamite to the department. More stories like this and —well, you know what it means. Now, what about this Hindu?"

"I'm holding him on illegal entry into the country," Mallory replied, "and I don't think he murdered Doctor Stone."

"Don't think?" the D. A. cried. "Then who did?"

"If I knew that," Mallory answered, "we wouldn't be worrying about a girl reporter."

"But—but you learned something overnight?"

"Enough to make this case a Chinese puzzle," Mallory said. "I've checked every person invited to that lecture and found nothing. But I have learned several interesting things about Trowbridge and his assistants. Trowbridge claimed he didn't know Doctor Stone. He did—very well, and the two weren't friends.

"I discovered that the invitation used by the Hindu to get into the lecture was sold to him by Morgan, Trowbridge's light man, for a hundred dollars. And I have discovered that Clay Gorman, Doctor Stone's secretary, has been tampering with his employer's accounts and is fifty thousand dollars short."

The district attorney jumped to his feet.

"Then why not arrest Gorman?" he shouted. "Shortage of funds——"

"—won't prove that he committed the murder," Mallory interrupted. "It wasn't his gun that was used. I checked on that. Gorman has a gun and a permit to use it, and it's not the same gun that killed Stone."

"And this man Langsdale—Morgan's assistant?"

"Langsdale," Mallory replied, "had a better motive than any of them to kill Stone—or I'm very badly mistaken."

"What was the motive?"

"I don't know for sure myself," Mallory answered. "I want to give Langs-

Lying in a huddled heap was the body of Professor Einfield.

dale a chance to tell me. By the way, did you ever hear of Arcturus?"

"The star?" The district attorney gasped. "What is this—a joke?"

"It might be a very grim one," Mallory retorted. "I'm going to the observatory to find out."

MALLORY arrived at the observatory a little after nine, before the morning visitors arrived. He went through the main entrance, directly up to the planetarium room. As he walked through the silent corridor, he saw a man dart through a side doorway.

In a fleeting glance, he knew that it was Clay Gorman, personal secertary to Doctor Stone. Mallory increased his walk to a dogtrot. He got to the side door where Gorman had disappeared, went through it into a small room. There was a door at the far side that led to a rear passage out of the observatory.

He followed this narrow corridor down a flight of stairs and went out of the observatory, but Gorman was not in sight. Mallory went back through the rear door, up the stairs and into the hallway that led to the planetarium room.

At the door of this room, he stopped. From the inside came the sound of someone pacing back and forth across the floor. Mallory pushed the door open less than an inch, just enough to peer inside. What he saw caused his lips to press tightly together and a puzzled expression to come to his eyes.

Walking back and forth across the floor was Professor Einfield, his eyes gazing at the Arcturus Star on the ceiling. He had moved the chair that Doctor Stone had sat in. This was obviously done deliberately, as if from some definite plan.

Mallory opened the door and walked in the room. Professor Einfield turned, paled at the sight of Mallory, and said: "Ah, Herr Lieutenant, I am trying to resume my studies of the Arcturus. I have only a week to do it in, you understand."

"I instructed Trowbridge," Mallory replied curtly, "that nothing in this room was to be moved."

"I am so sorry, Herr Lieutenant, "the professor said, "but you see—you understand, I am working on a difficult angle of Arcturus and I am forgetful."

"I am interested in this star Arcturus also," Mallory cut in. "Perhaps you can give me some information about it."

"I can tell you everything we poor humans know," the professor answered. "The science of Stars, you must appreciate, dates back beyond the days of the Egyptians. Herr Lieutenant, stand over here and look up at it."

Mallory moved over, close to where Professor Einfield had been standing when Doctor Stone was murdered. The professor was at his side. Mallory turned, looked up at the ceiling.

Somewhere behind him was a sharp *zipping* sound. A sharp, burning pain shot through the side of Mallory's head. His senses reeled and he slumped to the floor, the room turning around crazily, floor coming up to meet him in a topsy-turvy twisting!

He hit the floor, but when he did, the burning sensation left, and his senses came back. The room around him stopped moving. He lay on his side, shaking his head weakly. He knew what had happened. A bullet had creased the side of his head, not deep enough to knock him out, but enough to send him to the floor.

He struggled to his hands and knees. He was still dazed and his thoughts vague. He got to his feet, felt the side of his face. It was wet with warm blood. He looked around the room.

Professor Einfield was gone! Mallory smiled grimly, felt the side of his head again and then looked up at Arcturus.

Someone was running in the hallway outside the room. Mallory walked to the door. His strength had come back and his head had completely cleared. When he passed through the door and out into the hall, he saw Langsdale darting into the office of the observatory.

Mallory followed him into the office. Langsdale stopped at the desk, turned and looked at Mallory with terror-stricken eyes.

"What—what happened?" he gasped.

"Tell me and I'll tell you," Mallory answered. "Got a towel and some water around here? A bullet grazed the side of my face. And—by the way—did you see anything of Professor Einfield?"

"Professor Einfield?" Langsdale echoed weakly. "I—I saw him running down the hall. That's why I happened to be out there. I wondered what happened. But I heard no shot——"

"You don't when a gun has a silencer," Mallory retorted. "What about a towel and some water?"

"In the washroom here," Langsdale said.

Mallory went in the washroom, wiped the blood from his face, and walked back into the office, holding the towel.

"Trowbridge told me you just arrived here," he said to Langsdale. "What have you been doing the last ten or fifteen years?"

Langsdale looked at Mallory, wet his lips, and smiled humorlessly.

"You asked for it, Mallory," he said quietly, "and I'm going to tell you. I've got sense enough to know there's no use hiding it. I have been in prison. I was released a week ago."

MALLORY showed no surprise. "You did time because of assault with intent to kill," he said evenly. "You tried to kill a man named Griffith——"

"I guess you know the story as well as I do," Langsdale replied.

"Why did you try to kill Griffith?"

"I invented a formula when he and I worked in the same laboratory," Langsdale answered. "He stole it and patented it for himself——"

"You failed to kill him that time," Mallory shot back.

Langsdale got to his feet, his lips twitching and his body trembling.

"I swear, Mallory, I didn't know Stone was Griffith until I saw his face when he was dead," he cried. "I came here yesterday. I didn't know Griffith had changed his name to Stone. I swear I did not kill him."

There was a commotion at the door. Mallory swerved quickly. Professor Einfield came rushing into the room, followed by two policemen.

"Herr Lieutenant," he cried in amazement. "You are not dead? I saw you fall to the floor in the planetarium room and I ran for the police——"

"That's all right, professor," Mallory said quietly. "I didn't get killed because that bullet was not meant for me. It was meant for you and the murderer is a damned poor shot."

"Meant for me?" the professor cried. "I can't understand.

Mallory pointed to a paper lying on the desk, the first edition of the *Post Chronicle*, afternoon issue.

"Maybe that will make things plainer to you," he said.

The professor's eyes, following Mallory's finger, saw:

EINFIELD TO GO INTO TRANCE
AND NAME OBSERVATORY
KILLER

In an exclusive interview with a *Post Chronicle* reporter yesterday, a member of the Detective Bureau revealed that Professor Ernst Einfield had promised to go into a trance and name the person who committed the murder of Doctor Stone.

There was much more to the story, two columns, but the first paragraph was all Mallory gave the savant time to read.

"Don't you think that the police might be the proper parties for such a confidence?" he asked with burning irony.

Professor Einfield glanced again at the news story and shook his head in bewilderment.

"I know absolutely nothing about this," he said. "Why, it's ridiculous! I can't go in a trance."

DETECTIVE REGAN came rushing in the room, his heavy face worried.

"The D. A.," he said to Mallory. "He's hitting the roof about this story."

Mallory looked at Regan and nodded slowly.

"'A member of the Detective Bureau,'" he repeated slowly. "All right, Regan, how did the girl get this crazy story out of you?"

Regan flushed and looked very uncomfortable.

"I was stringing her," he explained. "I didn't think she would——"

"Sure, you were stringing her," Mallory retorted. "You didn't think she would believe you. Well, she didn't, but it gave her another chance to pull a story on this case that would make the department look foolish. And it is doing more than that; it is putting the life of Professor Einfield in danger."

"But that can't be," said the professor. "I don't know anything about the murder of Stone. This story is——"

"This story has convinced the murderer that you do know something," Mallory interrupted. "And because of that, the murderer tried to kill you in the planetarium room, and would have if I had not stepped in front of you."

The phone rang. Mallory picked up the receiver and handed it to the professor. He said, "Hello," waited a moment, listening, his face losing all color. Then he hung up weakly.

"You are right," he said weakly to Mallory. "That person said he was going to kill me."

Mallory grabbed the phone and shouted into it: "Hello—hello—this is the police. Trace the last call on this line—— Too late? All right, thank you."

"You shouldn't have hung up," he said to the professor. "You are leaving here in the company of Detective Regan, who will guard you——"

"But—but—my work," the professor protested. "I must finish it."

"You will have a chance to go to the observatory tonight," Mallory said. "That is, if you want to take a little risk to solve this murder. The murderer will be waiting for you here, knowing that you work here every night, and when he tries to kill you, it will be our chance."

The professor smiled wearily.

"But really, Herr Lieutenant," he protested, "it isn't pleasant to go where you are sure to be killed."

"You won't be killed," Mallory assured him. "I'll have my men all over the place. Will you help us?"

"Ja," the professor agreed without enthusiasm. "I will help you."

IT was early in the evening when Detective Mallory arrived at the observatory. Detective Regan was not there yet, so Mallory went directly to Trowbridge's office.

"Is everything ready?" he asked Trowbridge.

Trowbridge looked worried and his eyes moved over the room nervously.

"Everything is ready," he said, "but I don't like the idea of having another murder here——"

"There won't be," Mallory said. "Where is Professor Einfield's office?"

"Two doors down the hall to the right," Trowbridge explained. "Old Jim is in there, cleaning things up."

Mallory went to Professor Einfield's office and found the old watchman sweeping the floor.

"Mr. Trowbridge," he explained, "told me to come in here and clean the office because Professor Enfield is coming tonight."

Mallory went to the professor's desk, went through the books hurriedly, finally picking one up that was entitled:

THE STARS

By Hilliary Scofield

Mallory turned to the chapter on Arcturus, but found the page on this star half torn from the book. He tossed the book back on the desk and walked out of the office.

In the hall he met Kay Palmer, who smiled pleasantly and said: "Did you read my latest story?"

"Miss Palmer," Mallory said quietly. "When you wrote that ridiculous story you put the life of a man in danger. Did you stop to think that the murderer, reading that story, knows it was all faked? The murderer only knows that Professor Einfield may disclose the identity of the criminal and because of that one attempt has been made on the professor's life—and another will be made tonight."

Without giving her a chance to answer, Mallory went up to the telescope room. He remained there ten minutes and then returned to Trowbridge's office where Regan and Professor Einfield were waiting.

"You go to the telescope room and start your work," Mallory said to the professor. "You remember my instructions. Follow them to the letter, and nothing will happen to you."

The professor looked at his wrist watch.

"It is now 9.02," he said. "I must hurry. Arcturus passes the telescope at 9:08 and I must not miss it tonight."

"If you miss Arcturus," Mallory said, "we are going to miss a good chance to get the murderer."

THE professor walked out of the room, up to the telescope room. On the way he passed a number of plainclothes men, stationed in the hall and on the balcony on the outside of that room were others. Mallory and Regan followed the professor as far as the balcony.

Several minutes passed. Kay Palmer came up on the balcony. Much of the cocky attitude of the newspaperwoman was gone.

"Lieutenant," she said to Mallory, "I want you to know how sorry I am——"

Her words were stopped abruptly by the sound of a gunshot in the telescope room. Mallory leaped for the door, his face wearing a strange expression, and as he did, he said to Kay: "Your apology, I'm afraid, has come too late!"

He unlocked the door and rushed inside, stopping suddenly, his eyes riveted on the floor. Lying there in a huddled heap, was the body of Professor Einfield. Near him lay a revolver.

Trowbridge and Morgan came running in the room, stopping short at the sight that greeted them.

"The murderer got him," Mallory groaned.

"I would say that he got himself," Morgan said, gingerly picking up the revolver that lay near the professor. "Look! One shell is exploded. It looks like suicide."

Mallory took the gun, looked at the exploded cartridge, and said: "Suicide?"

The phone in the room rang shrilly. Mallory walked over to it and picked it up and said: "Hello, Mallory speaking. Yes, D. A.—Jim Gray there with important information about Einfield and Stone? Too late. Einfield is dead—you'll be right over?"

Mallory hung up.

"Trowbridge," he said. "You and Morgan go down and wait for the D. A., and the police. Regan and I will take charge up here."

Trowbridge and Morgan left. Mallory motioned for Kay Palmer to remain.

"Thanks," she said quietly.

"I want you to know now," Mallory said, "why I didn't give information to the papers. The reason is lying there on the floor. And now I suppose you'll run down and phone about Professor Einfield's suicide to your editor."

"But he's killed himself," Kay protested. "That is news."

Mallory laughed and said: "All right, professor."

Professor Einfield got to his feet. Kay stared at him, as if she were seeing a ghost."

"I'm not a ghost, Miss Palmer," the professor laughed. "Just played possum."

"Quick," Mallory ordered. "We have no time for explanations now. The D. A. will be here any minute, and you've got to be dead when the others enter this room. This is the only way we can hope to catch the murderer."

"I stood where you told me," Professor Einfield said. "The gun went off at exactly 9:08, when Arcturus came in line with the telescope."

Mallory walked up the ladder to the platform beside the giant telescope. He studied the photo electric cells used for photographing stars and nebulæ. He stepped down to the telescope and examined a hollow pipe connected by wires to the photo electric cells.

"A clever improvised rifle," he observed.

"They had it set to go off when you would be looking at Arcturus through the telescope," Mallory explained. "And if you hadn't been standing aside as I told you, you would be a dead man now. When I saw the page torn from the book on stars, the page that gave the data about Arcturus, I figured something like this would probably happen. The murderer, whoever he is, was also smart enough to plant this revolver and make it look like suicide."

THE sound of voices downstairs caused Mallory to get down from the platform quickly. Professor Einfield took his position of death again. A moment later the district attorney, accompanied by two policemen, who had Clay Gorman between them, entered the room. Behind them came Trowbridge, Morgan, and Jim Gray.

"I came as fast as I could, Mallory," the district attorney explained, "but the police picked up Gorman trying to get away, doing better than seventy miles an hour. So I waited to bring him along."

"Too bad, Gorman," Mallory said, "but it wasn't necessary to run from that shortage of funds. Professor Einfield has committed suicide. It is obvious that he killed Stone and took this way out."

Gorman stared down at the professor and wet his lips.

"The case is closed as far as I'm concerned," Mallory continued. "I owe all of you men an apology for suspecting you. There was plenty of reason for Gorman to want Stone dead, and Langsdale also had reason—perhaps more. Trowbridge didn't like Stone, and Morgan put himself under suspicion by selling that ticket to the Hindu."

Mallory turned and walked to a desk.

"To make our case perfect," he added, "it might be well to have what you took to the D. A., Jim."

Jim Gray pulled a picture from his pocket.

"This will prove that Einfield killed Stone," he said. "This picture I found in the professor's office. Einfield knew Stone. See the inscription under it."

Mallory looked at the inscription and read: "To my good friend, Professor Einfield. Frederick Stone."

"This would cinch the case against the professor," Mallory said, "except that it is forgery. This isn't the only thing you overlooked, Jim. You believed that story about the professor going into a trance and tried to kill him. You hit me instead. Then you tore the page from the book on the stars and found out when Arcturus would pass the telescope. You set a gun in the telescope itself to fire at that time."

Then, in a voice trembling with suppressed fury, he said, "You can get up now, professor. The play is over. Jim Gray murdered Doctor Stone, shot me, and tried to kill you!"

"I DIDN'T!" Jim shouted. "I don't know anything!"

"You knew enough to be with the District Attorney at 9:08 for a perfect alibi," Mallory retorted. "A clever scheme—almost perfect."

"It's a lie," Jim Gray cried. "You can't prove it."

He lunged for the revolver lying on the desk. His hands closed around it as he turned on the police.

"Nobody is going to arrest me for killing that murderer!" he cried. "Stone killed my boy with his anæsthetic! He made it—the great Stone! I learned it was not the operation, but the anæsthetic! He killed the only thing I ever loved—my boy—my——"

There was a shot. The gun fell from his hand and he slumped to the floor.

OUT in the hall, Mallory met Kay Palmer. She was pale from the death of old Jim, but she managed to smile.

"I asked you yesterday, what you were doing to-night," Mallory reminded her.

"You win, Mallory," Kay laughed. "It will be dinner for two."

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 63

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, with the Marx Brothers and Kitty Carlisle.

There's one thing about these Marx Brothers—either you like 'em, or you don't. If you do, you go crazy every time Groucho rolls his eyes, or Harpo jumps over a piano to chase a beautiful girl, and it makes no difference to you what the plot of the picture might be. So why should we bother to review this one?

IT'S THE MARX BROTHERS AGAIN, AS LOONEY AS EVER AND A LITTLE BIT MORE!

CAPTAIN BLOOD

A Warner Brothers picture, with Errol Flynn, Lionel Atwill, Robert Barrat, and Olivia de Havilland.

Raphael Sabatini has often been called the modern Dumas because of his ability to catch the glamour and daring of the bold swashbucklers of the past. Here's a picture based on one of his novels to make your hair stand on end with excitement. Errol Flynn makes his bid for stardom final with this one. As the sword-slinging leading man, he is definitely at his best.

BLOOD AND THUNDER OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BROUGHT TO THE SCREEN WITH A GRAND FLOURISH!

TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL

A Gaumont-British picture with Richard Dix, Leslie Banks, Madge Evans and Helen Vinson.

When Richard Dix, a great engineer, conceives the idea of tunneling beneath the ocean, from New York to London, he gets the coöperation of his old pal, Leslie Banks, and the backing of three of the world's great financiers. But, in the years of digging, many things work against his dream—love and jealousy, wars, and almost unbelievable dangers including a catastrophic encounter with a seething, undersea volcano!

PROPHETIC AND STIRRING! IT'S A GREAT STORY AND THRILLINGLY DONE, THANKS BE TO DIRECTOR ELVEY!

Continued on page 127

CHARLEY FARRELL, ATHLETE

A movie "hero" never can do the things he does in a picture——says who? Read this, and find out the truth about the man who carried the ball in "Fighting Youth".

CHARLES FARRELL a great lover—yes! Charley Farrell a great athlete—no!

That will be the verdict of ninety-nine out of the average hundred movie fans, men and women alike, upon hearing that Janet Gaynor's former screen sweetheart is starring in a football picture for Universal.

Fortunately, both for Farrell and the fans, this verdict will be incorrect. Farrell is just as great an athlete as a movie lover, only not so well known for his muscular prowess as for his romantic appeal. There is a perfectly good reason for this. The young man does the major part of his love making on the cinema screen. All of his feats as an athlete are performed far from the lens and the microphone. Never until the present has he played in a film which starred him as the hero of sport.

But if any one doubts that Charley Farrell can handle his bone and muscle, he has only to ask some of the boys at the Hollywood A. C. with whom the tall New Englander puts on the gloves—daily, when opportunity and movie-shooting schedules permit.

Farrell has played virtually every sport, except football. Some of them he excels in. Others find him more than average. He received his first taste of the gridiron game under the most grueling conditions—as a movie star supposed to run rough-shod over a squad of former All-Americans. Among these All-Americans was listed none other than Jim Thorpe, the noble red man, the greatest All-American of them all. Such men resent people running rough-shod over them, especially movie stars.

Farrell received his introduction to football in "Fighting Youth," the name of his present picture, when director Hamilton McFadden took him and most of the college stars to the Los Angeles Coliseum for the gridiron scenes.

Nick Lukats, Dale Van Sickle, Jim Purvis, Moon Mullins and many other pigskin idols were on that squad. They expected to derive a degree of quiet amusement watching Farrell throw himself about in the aimless and feeble manner of the untrained amateur. Paul Schwegler, All-American star, who is the living image of Farrell, had been signed to double for the leading man, if necessary, to avoid costly accidents.

To their surprise, the moleskin marvels found that the underrated screen hero, after a little instruction, could hold his own in scrimmage. When he hit them he hurt them. When they hit him he took it and got right up. He was trained hard as nails. Their polite disdain changed to respect. They began showing him the tricks of the gridiron gladiator's rugged trade. Schwegler did no doubling, but was given a straight rôle to play on his own.

The scrimmages were held under a

blazing August sun. In rehearsal, and between scenes, the players and technicians wore huge straw Mexican sombreros. Gaudy beach umbrellas bloomed on the sidelines and shaded the cameras.

UNDER one of these umbrellas, streaming perspiration and sucking pop through a straw, Farrell explained to the surprised athletes and newspaper men how he happened to be in such wonderful shape to be able to pick up the game so quickly.

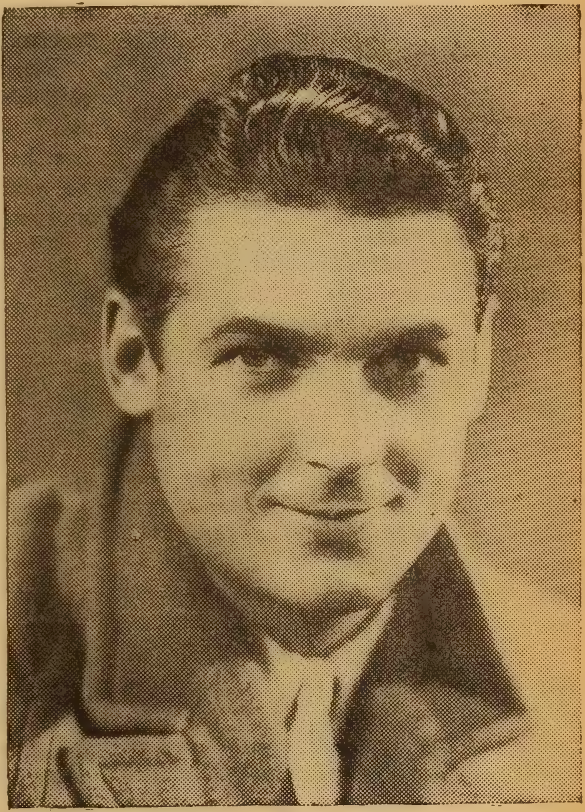
"It so happens," he said, "that my interests have always been in athletics, ever since I went to grade school back on Cape Cod. But it was not until I went to Boston University that I was really bitten badly by the sports bug. I trained hard and won a place on the first-string boxing team there. I wanted to make the swimming team, too, but I just didn't have enough speed in the water. I still swim a lot in the Pacific Ocean.

"Every time I go to the Hollywood A. C. for a daily workout with the medicine ball, I look for somebody to put the gloves on with me. I'll box any one," he grinned.

"At Big Boy Williams's ranch, I learned to rope and ride like a cowboy, if I do say so myself. That led me to take up polo, and I'm very fond of the game now. I play whenever I get a chance, with the Uplifters, Riviera, or any other Southern California club that will give me a place in the line-up.

"I play a lot of golf and even more of tennis (as a matter of fact, Farrell is recognized as the champion tennis player of the Hollywood screen colony) and with Ralph Bellamy, I own a good-sized tennis club at Palm Springs. I have a sail boat and I sail her myself. Funny thing: I have three crack bird dogs but I never go hunting. Fishing—yes."

History repeated itself in a painful though not unfamiliar manner, to Charles Farrell recently. He fractured his hand in a football sequence of his new picture, "Fighting Youth"—the same hand that was fractured twice when he was a student at Boston University eleven years ago. It was the same hand that was injured playing polo earlier this year.



CHARLES FARRELL,
a ladies' man, and a man's man, too!

It was the same gameness and sporting spirit that Farrell showed in his football debut in "Fighting Youth" that brought him to Hollywood in the first place. He did not go out to the Coast in a luxurious train compartment with a fat contract in his pocket. He went out to make his way in the movies on his own.

As a matter of fact, he toured his way across the continent as the manager and property man of a midget named "Little Billy." The story is so romantic that it has been attributed to half a dozen different stars, but Farrell is the fellow who actually did it.

CHARLEY'S father was in show business. He owned three theaters in Onset Bay, a little town on Cape Cod. Young Farrell worked around these theaters whenever he was free from school. When he went to Boston University, he was a practical theater man in the summer time. Incidentally, he went through college on his own, too. He made that a principle with him.

With his shrewd New England business sense, he was one of the boys who worked his way through college and made a profit at it. He worked in a restaurant to pay his tuition, and sold real estate on the side. He majored in psychology in school and practised it on his clients after class.

When he met Little Billy at one of Farrell, Senior's, theaters, he saw his chance to cross the continent and enter the movies—which had always held a fascination for him. He left the Lilliputian in Los Angeles and descended on Hollywood alone, without an atom of any kind of acting experience, not knowing what he could do, but with plenty of courage to try. He had exactly eighteen dollars in his jeans. His first objective was to get in a mob scene.

This sounded easier than it proved to be. There were hordes of extras looking for just that very thing. They knew their way about, while poor Farrell was a greenhorn. His exchequer had dwindled down to a dollar and thirty-seven cents when he finally landed a job as a member of a mob. This was in a picture directed by King Vidor.

Other rôles of the same caliber followed. Fortunately, they came frequently. This was an absolute necessity. In those days, extras received three dollars a day and to be able to live a man had to keep employed steadily at that rate of pay. But Farrell was learning all the time and also attracting a bit of attention.

This resulted in his getting a "bit" rôle in a Mary Pickford production, "Rosita." He thought this was the break, but that was an illusion of hope. Back he went into the extra cohorts and the mob scenes. It looked pretty hopeless.

When the break finally came, it came with a vengeance. From the extra ranks he was plucked to the heights of leading rôles. Fox signed him to act the masculine lead in "Wings Of Youth." He played it to the hilt. Comedy leads rewarded him.

Fox took him again for "Sandy," and that won him a long-term contract. He made "Old Ironsides," a picture about the famous wooden battleship *Constitution.* Wallace Beery was a Yankee seaman in this film too, burning powder beside the sharp-featured youngster from Cape Cod.

This was a Jesse Lasky production and Lasky liked Farrell's work so well that he gave him a prominent part in another historic film about "Teddy" Roosevelt and the Spanish American War, "The Rough Riders."

FARRELL right then was ready for his great opportunity, but he had no idea how close it was. Frank Borzage, at that time, was casting "Seventh Heaven" on the Fox lot. Farrell knew the story of the picture and he thought he knew the boy to play the grand rôle of Chico. That boy was not himself, but a friend of his in the ranks of the unrecognized.

He went to Borzage and begged the director to give his friend the rôle. While he was pleading with all the earnestness at his command, Borzage was not listening to a word he was saying. He was watching the boy; the play of expression on his face. When Charley had finished and stood waiting to hear what Borzage would say, he found that his friend had been denied the rôle. He was to play it himself.

"Seventh Heaven" brought Farrell opposite Janet Gaynor, to be in the future his sweetheart in many a moon-drenched movie romance. Although a silent film, "Seventh Heaven" is still considered one of the finest pictures ever made. Much of that was due to Borzage's direction, but most credit belonged to the delicious ardor of Farrell and Gaynor. The public at once took the pair to its heart and they became America's favorite sweethearts.

They followed up their initial success by another memorable performance in "Street Angel." The two scored together again in the musical hits "Sunny Side Up" and "High Society Blues." Then Fox suddenly decided to play them apart, each starring in separate pictures. The protest from the great American public was terrific. From all over the land the Fox studio was bombarded with letters which demanded that their favorites be reunited. There was nothing to do but accede to the demand, and Charles and Janet played in one of their more dramatic, rather than romantic, vehicles—"The Man Who Came Back."

Then they acted in "Merely Mary Ann," "Delicious," "The First Year" and "Tess Of The Storm Country."

Of course, there were other pictures in which Gaynor, from time to time, appeared alone; and Farrell also acted in such productions as "Body And Soul" with Elissa Landi, "After To-morrow" with Marian Nixon, "Heartbreak" with Madge Evans, and "Wild Girl" opposite Joan Bennett; but nothing could replace the Farrell-Gaynor features while he was with Fox.

The latest pictures in which Farrell has appeared have been "Aggie Appleby, Maker Of Men," "Girl Without A Room," "The Big Shakedown" and "Change Of Heart."

Although the long-limbed Cape Codder is primarily an outdoor man, he does not neglect the things of the spirit by any means. He is a great reader, with a pronounced flair for the serious in print—biography and psychological works. Fiction must be heavy to hold a place on the library shelves in his homes in Beverly Hills, Toluca Lake and Malibu Beach.

He drives his own car and is, like all adventurous souls, highly superstitious.

Yes, Charley Farrell is quite a man—and quite an athlete.

FIGHTING YOUTH

A Universal Picture, with Charles Farrell, June Martel, Andy Devine, J. Farrell MacDonald, Jim Thorpe, Dale Van Sickle, and Paul Schwegler.

This season's kick-off on football pictures has a lot of real players who were last year's gridiron sensations. It's too bad that they didn't give them more chance to show their stuff; there is just enough football to make you want more. The rest of the picture is devoted to a plot to discredit college sports. It is more than pleasant to report that, as the picture ends, all is well on the gridiron once more!

IT'S A RELIEF TO SEE AN ATHLETIC PICTURE MADE WITH ATHLETES FOR A CHANGE. THERE'S A GREAT TEAM OF ALL-AMERICANS HERE!

In LOVE at FORTY

The actual scenario from which Edgar Kennedy made his side-splitting comedy. Read this, and see how movies are made in Hollywood.

(Editor's Note: This is an actual "shooting script" from which a two-reel comedy, starring Edgar Kennedy, has been made by Radio Pictures. While not written to be read for enjoyment, we believe that the comic elements which are added to the script in the actual filming can also be added by the reader's imagination. All that is necessary is for the reader to understand the terms and phrases used here.

The script is divided into 118 separate scenes. This is for the director's convenience in scheduling his work, for each scene can be shot separately. However, there can be no break in continuity in a scene. From start to finish, each scene as written must have continuous action.

Each scene is prefaced with instructions for the director and cameraman. For instance, the first line of the first scene (Scene 4; Scenes 1, 2, and 3 were used for the title and cast) is:

4 *FADE IN—INT. ROOM MS.*

The number indicates the position, in sequence, of the scene.

FADE IN indicates that the scene to be shot should become visible gradually. The length of the fade may be only a second, or it may be longer, depending on the interpretation of the director and cameraman.

INT. ROOM means that the scene is the interior of a room. Scenes are always labeled as interior or exterior shots.

MS is the abbreviation for Medium Shot. Also used for camera instructions in this script are:

MCS—Medium Close Shot.
CU—Close-up.
CS—Close Shot.
MCU—Medium Close-up.
MLS—Medium Long Shot.
LS—Long Shot.

Other abbreviations used in this script are:

FG—Foreground.
BG—Background.

In several scenes, dialogue is preceded by *Off*, signifying that the lines are spoken "off stage"—that is, outside the range of the camera.

It is interesting to note that, in the scenes where Italian is spoken, the English translation is given. This is for the convenience of the censors who must pass upon all films before they are shown to the public. They must have accurate translations of all foreign words used in a picture in order to be sure that it will bring offense to no one.)

4 *FADE IN—INT. ROOM MS.*

Ed pacing floor, kicks table. Sits down on divan. Puts feet on table, kicking things off.

5 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Ed seated, looks at phone on table by divan. Moves closer to it. Takes off receiver. Dials number.

6 *INT. ROOM CU.*

Ed seated. Puts receiver to ear. Waits Talks over phone.

ED: Hello, Louie? Louie, I'm in trouble. No, don't ask any questions Come right over, Louie, it's desperate. Please. I'm desperate. Hurry, Louie

7 *INT. BARBER SHOP CS.*

Louie talks over phone.

LOUIE: Please don't worry. All right. I come right away.

He puts phone down.

LOUIE: Goodbye.

Camera moving back as he comes to FG reveals Charlie lying in barber chair. Louie talks to him.

LOUIE: Say, please, you don't mind if my wife, she shave you?

8 *INT. BARBER SHOP MS.*

Charlie lying in barber chair. Louie standing. Looking to BG. Calls.

LOUIE: Angeline! *(Talks in Italian,*

(Translation: Come here, quick!)

He turns to Charlie. Talking as he removes coat.

LOUIE: My friend, my great friend, Edgar Kennedy, is in trouble, and when a friend is in trouble, and he call me, Louie Balouchi. . .

9 *INT. BARBER SHOP CS.*

Louie talking dramatically.

LOUIE: Of the Neapolitan Balouchi's, and to a Neapolitan Balouchi, a friend in need.

Mrs. Balouchi comes on at left BG. Comes to him.

MRS. BALOUCHI: Whatsa matter now? Whatsa matter now?

Louie talks in Italian.

LOUIE: *(Translation:)* You shave the man.

10 *INT. BARBER SHOP MS.*

Louie putting on black coat. Talking in Italian to wife. Charlie lying in barber chair.

LOUIE: *(Translation:)* I must go. I'll be back soon. You shave him.

WIFE: You stay here.

Louie starts to FG.

11 *INT. BARBER SHOP CS.*

Louie coming to FG. Crosses to right FG exiting. Wife looking after him, talking. Charlie in barber chair.

WIFE: You stay here! You maka me sick. Oh!

Charlie sits up.

CHARLIE: Hey, do I get a shave or do I not get a shave?

She pushes him back into chair as she talks.

WIFE: You will get a shave.

She lathers his face as she talks.

THE CAST

Edgar Kennedy
Florence Lake
Dot Farley
Jack Rice
Curley Wright

RKO Radio PICTURES

Written by
Joe Cunningham

Directed by
Arthur Ripley

PRODUCED BY
RADIO PICTURES

WIFE: Oh, I getta sick and tired. All these men! I tell you, my husband . . . my husband he is crazy. He is.

12 *INT. ROOM MS.*

Ed pacing floor. Holding Flo's photo looks at it.

13 *INSERT NO. 1—PHOTO OF FLO.*

ED:—*Off.* Honestly, Florence, I didn't do this to you on purpose.

14 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Ed looking at photo. Talking.

ED: You shouldn't have gone away on a vacation and left me here all alone.

15 *INT. ROOM MS.*

Ed looking at photo of Florence. Talking.

ED: Oh, why did this have to happen to me.

He puts photo down. Doorbell heard. He goes to door in BG.

16 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Ed with back to camera. Opens door. Talks as Louie comes into room.

ED: Louie!

LOUIE: Eddie, what's the trouble? What's happened?

Ed closes door. Puts arm around Louie.

ED: I always knew you were a pal.

He starts to FG.

17 *INT. ROOM MS.*

Louie in BG standing at door. Watching as Ed comes to FG.

18 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Ed sitting down on divan at right. Louie coming to him. Stops by divan. Talks.

LOUIE: Eddie, what's happened?

He puts his hat down at left.

LOUIE: Don't be afraid from Louie. You can tell me everything.

19 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

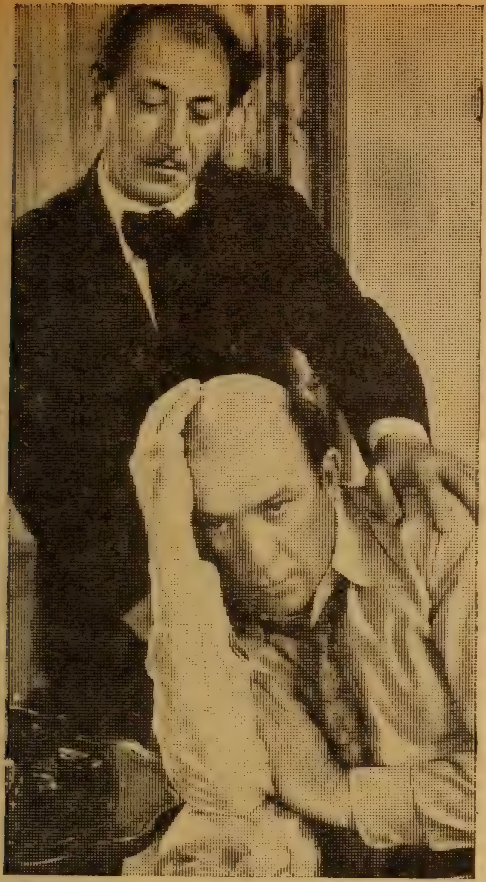
Louie looking down to right, talking.

LOUIE: Louie Balouchi is your friend, and to a Balouchi, a Neapolitan Balouchi, a friend in need is a friend in . . . need.

20 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

Ed seated. Head bowed. Louie partly on at left. Puts hands on his shoulders. Talking.

LOUIE:—*Off.* Come, Eddie, tell me. What's the trouble?



ED: Louie, I'm in love.

21 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

Louie looking down to right, surprised.

22 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

Ed seated. Louie partly on at left. Phone heard ringing. Ed hesitates. Picks it up. Talks.

ED: Hello.

23 *INT. ROOM MS.*

Ed seated on divan. Talking over phone. Louis standing by divan. Listening.

ED: Hello, darling.

He puts feet up on divan.

24 *INT. ROOM MS.*

Myrtle reclining on bed. Talks over phone.

MYRTLE: Oh, Eddie, do you think my husband is going to be very mad when I tell him about us?

25 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

Myrtle sitting up in bed. Talking over phone.

MYRTLE: Well, I don't care if he is. It's all his fault anyway. I never should have married a traveling salesman! Oh, Eddie, darling, you don't know what I've gone through with him.

26 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Ed seated on divan. Talks over phone.

ED: I understand you. I know what you need, and I'll give it to you. Give you all the happiness that you're entitled to. All the happiness that we're both entitled to.

27 *INT. ROOM CU.*

Myrtle sitting up in bed. Listening over phone. Yawns.

28 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Ed seated. Talks over phone.

ED: Now lay your little head down on your pillow and go to sleep. Everything's going to be all right. Good night, baby.

He rubs finger over face. Kisses into phone. Talks.

ED: Good night, sweetheart.

He puts phone down. Sighs.

29 *INT. ROOM MS.*

Ed seated. Looks around. Talks.

ED: Louie, Louie.

He rises.

ED: Louie, Louie!

Camera follows him across to right—calling——

ED: Louie, Louie, Louie, Louie, Louie!

He looks around. Louie coming on through doorway at right. Ed turns. Sees him. Talks.

ED: Oh, I thought you'd left me flat. What's the matter? What's the matter, Louie?

30 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

Louie holding glass and soda box. Talks.

LOUIE: Oh, I'm sick. I am a Balouchi and I am a very sensitive. I hear you talk on the telephone, and you get lovesick. I think of your wife, and me, I geta seasick.

31 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Ed coming on at right. Talks.

ED: Me, too, Louie.

He sits down in chair.

32 *INT. ROOM MS.*

Ed seated. Louie standing at right. Goes to him as he talks.

LOUIE: Eddie, have you lost your mind?

33 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Ed seated. Louie standing at right by him. Talking.

LOUIE: What about your wife?

ED: Louie.

He rises.

34 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

ED: That's what I sent for you for.

Ed looking to right. Talking.

ED: Tell me, tell me honestly. Can a man love two women at the same time?

35 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

Louie scratching head thoughtfully. Talks.

LOUIE: Not if they find out about it.

36 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

Ed looks to right. Looks down.

37 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Ed seated on arm of chair. Louie standing at right. Talks to him.

LOUIE: Eddie, pull yourself together. Tell me, who is this woman? When you meet her?

38 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

Ed looking to FG dreamily. Talks.

ED: The day before yesterday!

39 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

Louie looking to left FG, surprised. Talks.

LOUIE: Day before yesterday?

40 *INT. ROOM MS.*

Louie standing by chair. Ed seated on arm of chair. Rises. Talks.

ED: Aw, Louie, you . . . you don't understand. You just don't understand. That's the way I do things. Just like I lose my temper. That's the way I fall in love.

41 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

Ed looking to right FG. Talking.

ED: The moment I met Florence, it was just like that, too.

He snaps his fingers.

ED: And we were married that same night.

42 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Louie at right. Talks to Ed.

LOUIE: Yes, my friend, and you're still married.

Ed yells.

ED: Yes, I'm still married, oh . . .

43 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

Ed talks quietly.

ED: Florence, you poor little darling, your whole life wrapped up in me.

44 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Ed talking. Louie standing at right.

ED: If she finds out about this thing, it'll break her heart.

He yells.

ED: Oh, if I had an ounce of manhood left in me I'd break this thing off, Louie. Louie, that's why I sent for you. How can I do it? How can I do it, Louie?

Phone heard ringing. He looks off to left. Talks.

ED: Answer the phone, Louie, and if it's Myrtle, tell her I'm not here.

Louie starts to cross in front of him to left.

ED: But tell her easy . . . nice, huh?

Louie exits left. Phone heard ringing.

45 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Louie coming on at right FG. Goes to phone. Picks it up. Talks.

LOUIE: Hello. Yes. Who?

He looks off to right nervously. Talks.

LOUIE: Eddie, it's for you. It's Florence.

46 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

Ed looks off to left, surprised, as he listens.

LOUIE:—*Off.* She's calling up from Wildwood Lodge.

ED: Florence!

47 *INT. ROOM MS.*

Camera following Ed as he crosses to left reveals Louie standing by divan. He hands phone to Ed. Ed sits down. Talks nervously.

ED: I hope she don't notice the change in me.

48 *INT. ROOM CU.*

Ed seated. Talks over phone.

ED: Hello, Florence darling. What? What? I can't hear you, dear.

49 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Flo seated in chair. Talks over phone.

FLO: Edgar, I . . I . . . Edgar, I'm in love.

50 *INT. ROOM CU.*

Ed seated, listening over phone. Looks surprised.

51 *INT. ROOM CU.*

Flo seated. Talks over phone.

FLO: Oh, Edgar, he's wonderful! He has hair like Clark Gable's, eyes like Bob Montgomery, and a chin like Fredric March's, and . . . and in one of those new rubber bathing suits, he looks like . . . Tarzan!

52 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Ed seated. Talks over phone angrily. Louie standing at left.

ED: Stop it, stop it! I've heard enough.

He puts down phone. Mumbles.

ED: Tarzan. . . . Hair like Clark Gable. . . . Eyes like Robert Montgomery. . . . . Chin like Fredric March!

LOUIE: What's happened? Whatsa matter? What does she say?

Ed bellows angrily.

ED: She said he's got hair like Clark Gable. . . . Eyes like Robert Montgomery, and a chin like Fredric March! And that in a bathing suit he looks like Tarzan! Now do you understand?

LOUIE: Oh. Madre Mia! (Mother of Mine.)

He raves in Italian, indistinctly.

53 *INSERT NO. 2—SIGN OVER ROAD*

WILDWOOD LODGE
CABINS

54 *INT. ROOM MS.*

Brother in BG standing on window seat. Swinging polo stick. Talking. Mother seated at left. Back partly to camera. Flo crossing to left, sobbing.

BROTHER: There now, baby. That's the boy now. Steady, steady.

He throws stick down. Gets down from window seat.

BROTHER: What's the use of practicing a stroke. You've got to have a horse to play a game like this.

FLO: Oh, mother . . .

55 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Flo standing by desk, sobbing, talking.

FLO: He hung up on me. He really believes I've fallen in love with another man.

She turns back to camera, sobbing. Mother comes on at left FG. Goes to her. Talking.

MOTHER: Oh, there, there . . .

She takes Flo in her arms.

MOTHER: Now, darling, you just leave everything to mother.

56 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

Brother seated. Looking off to left. Talks sarcastically.

BROTHER: Yeah, mother knows best.

57 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Mother and Flo standing by desk. Mother holding her in her arms. Flo. sobbing. Mother turns. Goes to right. Exiting.

58 *INT. ROOM MS.*

Brother seated at right. Mother coming on at left. Goes to him. Talks angrily.

MOTHER: Brother, I'll have none of your sarcasm, and if you'd . . .

Flo coming on at left. Going to window seat.

BROTHER: Yes, yes, yes, I know. I would have amounted to something.

Flo sobbing.

MOTHER: You would have . . .

She turns to Flo.

MOTHER: And Florence . . .

59 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Flo seated, sobbing. Mother sitting down at right. Talking.

MOTHER: When Mrs. Goebel phoned that Edgar was running around with Myrtle Miller, you begged brother and me to give you our advice, and we did.

60 *INT. ROOM MLS.*

Mother and Flo seated in BG. Brother seated at right BG. Flo sobbing. Mother talking.

MOTHER: And Edgar Kennedy is no different than any other man.

BROTHER: No, he's a push-over.

Flo rises. Talks defiantly.

FLO: I don't care what either of you say.

She crosses to desk as she talks.

FLO: I'm going to pack my things and go home.

61 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Flo standing at desk. Talking.

FLO: I love Edgar, and I'm not going to lose him.

FADE OUT

REEL TWO

1 *FADE IN—INT. ROOM MLS.*

Ed leaning over. Louie pulling at strings on corset around Ed. Ed talks.

ED: Take it easy, Louie.

LOUIE: Now you stop complaining, my friend. If you want to wina back your wife, you must look like you're not . . .

2 *INT. ROOM MS.*

Ed leaning over. Louie pulling at strings on corset around Ed. Talking

LOUIE: You gotta no hair like Clark Gable, and you gotta no chin like Fredric March, but don't worry, my friend, I fix you up. I give you chest like Tarzan.

He gives big tug at strings.

ED: Listen, Louie, do you think I can win her back?

LOUIE: Aw, you do what Louie Balouchi say, and pouf! It is over.

ED: I'll do anything you say, Louie.

LOUIE: All right. You . . . you watch me.

ED: Yeah.

LOUIE: I show you how. I gotta experience.

Louie starts to left BG.

3 *INT. ROOM MLS.*

Ed watching as Louie goes to doorway. Exits in hallway. Comes on. Stops in doorway. Talks.

LOUIE: Florence, come here!

He steps forward.

LOUIE: Florence

4 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Louie looking to FG. Talking sternly.

LOUIE: You come to your husband!

5 *INT. HALLWAY CS.*

Door opening. Wife looks in.

6 *INT. ROOM MS.*

Wife coming on thru doorway. Looking to FG angrily. She closes door.

7 *INT. ROOM MLS.*

Louie standing with back to doorway. Ed at right. Wife comes on in doorway. Watching as Louie talks to Ed.

LOUIE: That is only the first step. Then when she come to you, you grab her and you kiss her like this. Umm.

He shows Ed how to kiss her. Ed sees wife in doorway. Grabs robe. Holds it in front of himself.

ED: Oh, oh!

8 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Louie looking to right FG, talking. Wife standing in doorway behind him, watching angrily.

LOUIE: After you kiss her, you then have her in your power. She is yours. Then you become gentle.

9 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Ed looking to left FG gesturing nervously.

10 *INT. ROOM MS.*

Louie talks to Ed. Wife behind Louie. Ed gesturing frantically.

LOUIE: But first you must be forceful. Remember, you are a man. She is a woman.

11 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Louie looking to right FG, talking. Wife behind him, listening angrily.

LOUIE: And a woman must be dominated.

WIFE: Is dat so?

She whacks him. He turns to her. Both talking at once indistinctly in Italian.

12 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Ed listening wearily. Arguing heard. Indistinct talking.

WIFE:—*Off.* Go on home. . . . You go home!

Indistinct talking heard.

13 *INT. ROOM MLS.*

Wife and Louie both talking at once. Indistinctly. Wife whacking him as they go to door. Ed at right watching wearily. Louie exits in hall. Wife turns. Looks around at Ed.

14 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Wife looking off to right FG. Talks angrily.

WIFE: You worn-out piece of chunka cheesea you!

She starts to turn to BG.

15 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Ed looking off to left FG. talks meekly.

ED: Good night.

Door heard slamming.

16 *INT. ROOM MLS.*

Ed looking off to left BG. Phone heard ringing. He goes to divan. Sits down. Picks up phone.

17 *INT. ROOM MS.*

Ed seated on divan. Puts receiver to ear. Talks.

ED: Hello, hello, Myrtle.

18 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

Myrtle sitting up in bed. Talks over phone.

MYRTLE: Your little baby can't sleep. Won't her little Eddie tell hims little sweetums a good night story?

19 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Ed seated on divan, holding phone. Rubs his face, embarrassed. Thinks. Talks into phone.

ED: Once upon a time, there was a itty bitty mousie, and the itty bitty mousie was nibbling at a itty bitty piece of cheese. Now the itty bitty mousie didn't know it, but right behind him was a great big pussy cat. Now the great big pussy cat thought . . .

He looks down to left—sees——

20 *INSERT NO. 1—PHOTO OF FLORENCE—*

21 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Ed seated on divan. Looking at photo of Florence on table. Bellows into phone.

ED: He was going to catch that little mousie, but the little mousie fooled that great big pussy cat and he is going right on fooling that great big pussy cat. Do you understand?

He slams down receiver.

FADE OUT

22 *FADE IN—INSERT NO. 2—SIGN OVER ROAD—READS*

WILDWOOD LODGE
CABINS

23 *EXT. LODGE LS.*

People in front of lodge laughing and talking indistinctly. General activity in BG. Ed drives on at right in roadster. Sound of car heard. He stops in front of lodge. Starts to get out of car.

24 *EXT. LODGE MS.*

Ed getting out of car. People in BG laughing and talking indistinctly. Ed looks at self in car mirror. Adjusts beret and coat. Starts to BG.

25 *INT. LODGE MS.*

Guests seated about. Clerk at desk in BG. General indistinct talking and laughter heard. Ed coming on at left. Goes to desk.

26 *INT. LODGE CS.*

Ed standing at desk. Looking about nervously. Clerk behind desk. Putting letters into boxes. General indistinct talking and laughter heard. Ed turns to desk. Taps it. Clerk looks around. Ed talks.

ED: Would you mind calling Mrs. Kennedy's cabin and telling her that an old friend is here to see her?

27 *INT. LODGE MCU.*

Clerk behind desk. Looks thoughtful. Talks.

CLERK: Mrs. Kennedy. Oh, Mrs. Kennedy checked out this morning. She left for the city about an hour ago.

He turns to BG.

28 *INT. LODGE MCU.*

Ed standing at desk, smiling. Looks down angrily. General indistinct talking and laughter heard. He rubs hand over face. Exits left.

29 *EXT. LODGE MLS.*

Car partly on at left FG. People in front of lodge. General indistinct talking and laughter. Ed comes out of lodge. Comes to car in FG. Takes off beret. Throws it in car. Takes off coat. Throws it down.

30 *EXT. LODGE MCS.*

Ed standing by car. Others in BG. General indistinct talking and laughter. Ed pulls suspenders down. Expands. Ripping sound heard. He pulls up polo shirt. Pulls out one side of corset. Throws it down. Scratches self. Puts up suspenders. Gets into car.

31 *INT. ROOM MLS.*

Brother in BG. Talks over phone. Flo and mother on either side of him.

BROTHER: Hello. Oh, Wildwood Lodge? Has there been a fellow up there this morning looking for Mrs. Kennedy?

32 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

Brother talking over phone.

BROTHER: You know, a kind of a fat, bald-headed, sloppy-looking guy?

33 *INT. LODGE MCU.*

Clerk leaning on desk. Talks over phone.

CLERK: No, there was no one here like that. There was a young man here though, very distinguished looking; said he was a friend of Mrs. Kennedy's. He left a long time ago, though.

34 *INT. ROOM MCU.*

Brother talking over phone.

BROTHER: No, no, that couldn't have been him. Thanks. Thanks.

35 *INT. ROOM MLS.*

Brother in BG. Puts phone down. Mother and Flo on either side of him. Brother talks to them.

BROTHER: No, he hasn't been up there.

Flo comes toward FG, sobbing, talking. Mother following him.

FLO: Oh, I've lost him. I've lost him.

MOTHER: Supposing you have lost him? You haven't lost anything.

Flo sits down on suitcase, sobbing.

36 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Flo seated, sobbing. Mother at right talking. Brother at left.

MOTHER: Let him have his Myrtle. It's good riddance to bad rubbish.

FLO: I don't care what he's done. If he'd only come back, I'd forgive him.

MOTHER: Oh, don't be a fool!

FLO: I can't help it. I shouldn't have lied to him. I should never have told him about Tarzan. I should have come back when I heard about it.

BROTHER: I thought it was a good idea.

FLO: Yes, you did. It's all your fault in the first place.

37 *INT. HALLWAY MCS.*

Door opening. Ed comes on, discouraged. Starts to FG. Stops as he hears.

FLO:—*Off*. Oh, I don't know what you've done but you've made me lose Edgar. I've lost everything. You've done it.

BROTHER:—*Off*. All right. I wash my hands of the whole affair. After this use your own judgment.

MOTHER:—*Off*. Now look here. You can't talk to brother like that.

FLO:—*Off*. I will talk to brother.

Camera follows Ed to right. He exits behind drape. Others heard talking indistinctly. Ed comes on, wearing beret and coat. Stops in doorway.

38 *INT. ROOM MLS.*

Flo seated on suitcase. Mother and brother on either side of her. All talking at once indistinctly. Ed standing in doorway in BG, bellows.

ED: Florence!

Flo rises. They turn. Look at him dumbfounded.

39 *INT. ROOM CU.*

Flo looking to left FG.

40 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Ed looking off to right FG. Talks. Commandingly.

ED: Florence, come.

He weakens. Talks meekly.

ED: Honey, come. Huh?

41 *INT. ROOM CU.*

Flo looking to left FG. Talks.

FLO: Oh, Edgar!

She comes to left FG. Exciting.

42 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Ed holding out his arms. Flo coming on at right. Goes to him. Puts arms around him.

FLO: Eddie, oh, Edgar, will you ever forgive me for telling you those awful lies?

ED: Lies?

FLO: I didn't meet anybody in the moonlight. There wasn't any Clark Gable, or Robert Montgomery, or Fredric March. There wasn't any Tarzan. There isn't anybody, Edgar, but just you.

ED: There's nobody, Florence, but just you.

FLO: Oh, Eddie!

They embrace.

43 *INT. HALLWAY MS.*

Door opening. Husband looks in. Calls.

HUSBAND: Yoo-hoo!

44 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Ed and Flo embracing. Ed looks to FG as he hears.

HUSBAND:—*Off*. Yoo-hoo.

45 *INT. ROOM MS.*

Husband coming into hall. Closes door. Looks around. Talks.

HUSBAND: Yoo-hoo, where is everybody?

46 *INT. ROOM MLS.*

Ed and Flo standing near doorway. Mother and brother at right, watching to left as husband comes on through doorway. Sees them. Talks.

HUSBAND: Oh, there you are.

Puts hat down at left.

HUSBAND: Hello, everybody.

47 *INT. ROOM MCS.*

Flo standing by Ed. Husband at left. Talks to her.

HUSBAND: Are you Mrs. Kennedy?

FLO: Yes.

HUSBAND: Charmed, I'm sure.

He talks to Ed.

HUSBAND: And you're Mr. Kennedy?

ED: Yes.

Husband shakes his hand.

HUSBAND: How do you do. I'm very glad to know you.

ED: How do you do.

HUSBAND: I'm Myrtle Miller's husband.

48 *INT. ROOM CU.*

Ed closes eyes. Frowns.

ED: Oh!

49 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Brother and mother looking off to left FG, dumbfounded.

50 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Husband looking to right FG, talks.

HUSBAND: I just dropped in, Mr. Kennedy, to say hello. I . . . I thought you might be interested to know that Myrtle and I are going to Honolulu on our second honeymoon.

51 *INSERT NO. 3. FOOT PUSHING STOOL ACROSS TO RIGHT.*

HUSBAND:—*Off.* We may come back and we may not come back.

Foot steps up on stool.

52 *INT. ROOM CU.*

Husband stepping up. Talking.

HUSBAND: But just in case we do come back, Mr. Kennedy, will you remember this.

53 *INT. ROOM CU.*

Ed smiles sheepishly. Talks to husband. Partly on at left FG.

ED: Yeah.

HUSBAND: Keep away from my wife.

Husband socks Ed on nose.

ED: Oh, oh.

Husband exits left.

54 *INT. ROOM MLS.*

Ed in BG. Flo and husband on either side of him. Mother and brother at right. Husband picks up hat. Talks.

HUSBAND: I . . . I hope you'll pardon the intrusion. Good afternoon.

He exits left through doorway.

55 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Mother and brother laugh delightedly.

56 *INT. ROOM CS.*

Ed squelched. Flo turns to him as she talks sympathetically. Laughter heard.

FLO: That big brute! Oh, Edgar, are you hurt? Did he hurt you when he hit you in the nose? There you . . . you see, I can't even go away for a few days that you don't get yourself punched in the nose.

She giggles. They laugh. Put arms around each other.

FADE OUT

57 *FADE IN. TITLE NO. 1. PIANO HEARD PLAYING "CHOP STICKS."*

The JUNIOR ADVENTURER'S CORNER

COLUMBIA'S JUNIOR ADVENTURERS CLUB

Old Adventurer Says—"Meet Casey Jones!"

WELL, how're all the Junior Adventurers to-day?

Since we met last, I've been rustling around to see what sort of a yarn I could dig up for you. I kept thinking about that story from Honorary Adventurer Jack Dempsey last month and wondering if somebody wouldn't have something to sort of follow that one up.

So I went to Newark to hunt up another Honorary Adventurer—Casey Jones, who's been in the airplane business for going on twenty-five years, now.

"Casey," I said to him, "What am I going to do for a story to follow Jack Dempsey's?"

"That's easy," he snapped right back. He's got a fast way of talking, crisp and sort of barking. "What's the matter with the story of the fellow who helped lick Dempsey at Philadelphia?"

"Whoa, brother! Gene Tunney licked him that time, and he did it all alone!"

"Maybe he was in the ring all alone," Casey admitted, "but there's more to the yarn than that."

"You've got to show me," I told him. "Who was the other man?"

Casey Jones grinned. His black, bushy mustache seemed to spread out all over his face. "The other man," he said, "was me."

"DO you remember about aviation back in 1926?" he started in. "Even though it was eight years after the war, and a lot of improvements had been made in airplanes, people still thought you were crazy if you went up in one of the darned things. It was the year that saw a lot of serious crashes. It was the year that several good men tried to fly across the ocean. A few of them, if I remember right, were rescued by passing ships. Most of them died. Just one fellow made it in good shape—a kid from the middle West. His name was Lindbergh.

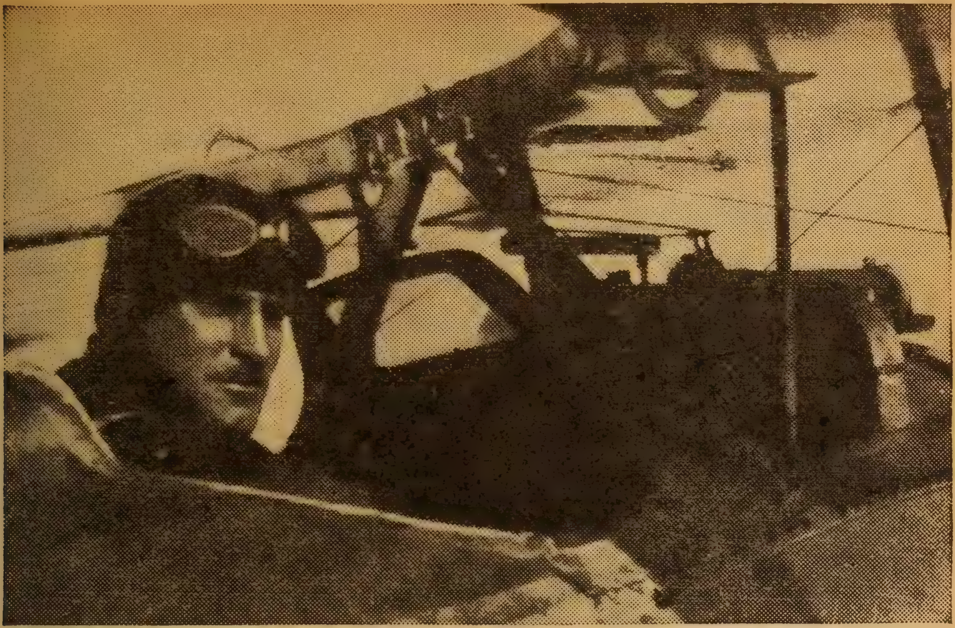
"Well, it was that same year that Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney first met in Philadelphia. Gene was something new to the prize ring. He read high-brow books. He didn't look like a tough guy. He could talk politely, and he knew some of the country's finest minds.

"That's why the newspaper boys loved to hang around Gene's training camp up near Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. He was always good for a story.

"One day, a fellow named Wade Morton dropped in to see him. He was an old friend of Gene's, although where Gene ever picked up with a racing driver I can't tell you. Anyway, Wade was driving from Detroit to New York, and he stopped off to see his old friend and to discuss the fight.

"Tunney told him that one thing he wanted to do—although if he spilled the beans to Billy Gibson (Tunney's manager) or the newspaper boys, he'd never forgive him—was to fly to Philadelphia the day of the fight. And did Wade know anybody who could be trusted to pilot him?

"Wade did, and after a little palaver, he came on to New York and hunted me up. He didn't have to ask me if I'd do it or not. All he wanted to know was if it was safe.



"CASEY" JONES AT THE THROTTLE!

"I told him that I'd have to be the sole judge of whether it was safe or not. It depended, mostly, on weather conditions. I knew my plane was equal to the job as long as I could see where we were going. I'd flown a lot of celebrities before, you know. Everybody from movie stars to United States Senators.

"So one morning we went up to Stroudsburg, together, just Wade and myself. We drove instead of flying, because we didn't want to start any wild talk. But, as we walked into Tunney's training quarters, one of the reporters spotted me. I heard a lot of whispering going on behind us, and then, just as I was shaking hands with the future Champ, I heard them collar Billy Gibson.

" 'Billy,' they were saying, 'That's Casey Jones, the aviator, over there, talking to Gene. Does that mean he's going to fly down to the fight?'

"Gibson waved them away. 'Of course not!' he said. 'Do you think I'm crazy? Do you think I'd let my boy fly when there's going to be over a million dollars at the gate and who knows how many more millions in bets? Don't be silly!' he said. 'Gene'll drive down, or go by train. I'll let you know which one later.'

"Tunney heard it all, too, but he never batted an eye. 'Come on in here, fellows,' he said, and pulled us into a little room by ourselves. Then he told me just why he was so keen on flying down.

"First of all, there was the comfort of flying. No gasoline fumes to make him woozy. No stuffy Pullman compartment. And he'd only be traveling a fraction of the time it would take any other way.

"Second, there was the mental relief that he would get. He explained that traveling always made him nervous. The quicker he could get the trip over with, the better he'd like it.

"But the big reason was that he wanted to impress Dempsey. With all the black eyes that aviation had in those days, if he could make Jack Dempsey feel that he was absolutely sure of himself—of everything he did—he'd have a great advantage when he stepped into the ring. He wanted the Champ to think that a million-dollar fight meant so little to him that he'd do anything he pleased—even risk his neck for the fun of it—before the first bell rang!

"So the day before the fight, I flew up from New York to Stroudsburg in the best and safest plane I could find. Instead of raising a lot of fuss, I landed at the Shawnee Country Club and phoned Gene from my hotel, saying I was there and ready for him the next morning. Then I went to sleep."

"I GOT up the next morning, and almost fainted when I looked out the window. I've never seen a foggier day in my life! You couldn't see ten feet ahead of you! I phoned New York and Philadelphia, and they both reported rain and heavy fog. Also, that there were no planes up—not even the Mail planes!

"Then I phoned Tunney and told him the flight was off. He said that it was too bad, but I was the boss, and if I said it was no go, he would drive in. Then he offered to take me in to Philadelphia if I'd care to drive down with him.

"I explained that I couldn't; that I'd have to fly my ship down to Philadelphia some way because I had already contracted to fly the fight pictures back to New York as soon as the winner was announced. 'What's that?' he asked me. 'You're going to fly anyway? I thought it was impossible to take off, the way you were talking.'

"I told him that it wasn't impossible at all, but that the conditions weren't what I'd call favorable. Rather than run any risks, I wouldn't fly *him* down. So I hung up the receiver, and when I got out to my ship an hour later, there was Gene Tunney with about forty reporters and Billy Gibson all standing around, wringing their hands!

" 'Hello, Casey,' he called out to me. 'Here I am. I'm all ready.'

" 'I won't take you,' I told him.

" 'If you can make it alone, you can make it with me, too,' he insisted, and climbed into the passenger's seat. So what could I do? I couldn't very well try to make him get out—not with him on his way to fight the Heavyweight Champion of the World! I got in, too. Somebody spun the propeller, and we bumped off into the fog.

"By flying low, I was able to find the Delaware River in about five minutes. Stroudsburg's practically on the river, you know. And on a clear day, it would have been a cinch to just follow the river down the valley to Philadelphia.

"But we were taking off into almost solid fog. That meant flying low over the river—no more than twenty-five feet above the water. And, since the river, up there, has to flow through the Delaware Water Gap, it also meant that we were liable to go banging into the side of one of the cliffs that form the river bank, or crash into one of the mountain sides if we missed any of the turns."

"SAY, I've never seen a river in my life that had as many twists as the Delaware did that morning!

"I'd flown over the same route hundreds of times before, and never given it a thought. But now I was trying to remember every little kink in the stream, planning my turns ahead of time, then holding onto my controls for dear life after I'd made them, ready to jerk back the other way in case I'd been wrong.

"I was wrong a couple of times. Once, I thought we were goners! I thought I remembered two sharp turns to the left. I made one of them, and, looking down, I still saw the river under us. Then I pulled around the second one and, as I did, I felt something yank the plane nose down! I shot her up, giving her the gun, and as I looked back, I saw we had just clipped the top of a tree with our undercarriage! It was a turn to the right I should have made!

"So I circled back, dropping slowly until I found the river again, turned right, and tried to figure what was coming next."

Casey'd gotten so all-fired wrapped up in his story that he'd let his pipe go out! He stopped and lit it again, puffed a while, and then said:

"I suppose you'd like to know what I was thinking about while all this was going on. Well, I was worried about the possibility of having to make a forced landing. I could sit down in the river, if I had to, and neither Tunney or myself would be hurt much. But if he even sprained a finger, twisted an ankle, scratched his cheek, or strained a muscle in his back, I'd be personally responsible for ruining a scrap that meant millions of dollars to the whole world.

"Then I could see myself being mobbed by reporters, all of them slinging dirty insinuations at me. I could see headlines, saying that I had been paid by 'mysterious parties' to cripple Tunney. I thought about racketeers—big gamblers—trying to put me on the spot with their machine guns for upsetting the odds, or for losing their money for them. Oh, there was plenty going through my head, let me tell you!

"Then I got a brain storm. I realized that the road along the river was literally packed with cars heading for the fight in Philadelphia. When I couldn't see anything else but fog, I could see the yellow glare of the headlights of a thousand cars stretched out in a long, thin line.

"From then on, it was easy. I swung over, above the road. It was just as good as having a radio beacon. All I had to do was stay far enough up to make the lights blurred in the fog. I knew, as long as I couldn't see them too plainly, I wasn't in any danger of crashing into a little rise or the side of a house.

"Finally, when Philadelphia came up under us, I knew we were all okay. I swung around the field once and then put the ship down. Just as I'd figured, there was a mob waiting for us—all reporters. They came running over to the ship even before the propeller had stopped spinning. They mobbed Gene, wouldn't be satisfied until he'd sworn up and down that he was fit as a fiddle. Even so, the story got out that when we'd landed Gene had been so air-sick that he couldn't walk from the plane.

"It wasn't so, though. I can prove that. I've got a picture that one of the photographers took of us together. Gene got it and autographed it to me afterward. Want to see it?"

NOW, you might want to know what a man who helped lick Jack Dempsey is doing these days. Let me tell you, as an Old Adventurer who's seen a lot of amazing things in his day, that Casey Jones knocked me clean off my pins!

He's running a school—Casey Jones School of Aeronautics, he calls it—in the heart of Newark, New Jersey. He doesn't waste his time teaching fellows to fly because, as he puts it, "What's a youngster with a pilot's license going to do for a living? No commercial line will hire him—he's too young. And there's no money in exhibition flying these days, now that riding in an airplane is almost as common as dirt."

No, sir! He's teaching young fellows from eighteen to twenty-four everything there is to be known about building, repairing, and maintaining airplanes! He's got a tremendous workshop where these youngsters—350 of them—study plane construction eight hours a day, five days a week, and fifty weeks out of the year. After 100 weeks' intensive training under Casey, a fellow knows all there is to be known about that part of the flying business, and there's most usually a job waiting for him some place, in some factory or airport where they're looking for smart youngsters.

Honorary Adventurer Casey Jones, you're a swell fellow! You're helping a lot of young fellows get off to better starts every day! And if that isn't living up to all twelve of the Adventurer's Laws, I don't know what is!

HOW do you like your Junior Adventurers Club pins? It's great to see so many of them sparkling in the sunshine as I walk down the street! Seems to me that every fellow and girl that has one is wearing his pin as prominently as possible. You just can't miss them!

That reminds me that I wanted to check up on the troop situation. Are you a Junior Adventurer all by yourself without a platoon to meet with? If you are, why don't you get some of your friends to join with you? Start a platoon of your own. Then you'll be able to have group activities—teams of different sorts—adventures shared by all your friends.

When you are all r'arin' to go, with your fellow members all signed up, send in your membership applications in a bunch, and we'll tell you how to organize, what officers you'll need, how to elect them, and everything else you'll have to know to start with.

You'll always find an application blank at the end of the Junior Adventurer's Corner in MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE. It's a fine thing to finish up with, isn't it?

WELL, time's getting short. How're the basketball teams coming on? I'm waiting to see the scores and see how many Junior Adventurers' teams beat how many other teams, and how bad the lickings were that they handed out! Same goes for ice hockey, too. Scores, pictures, details of the games—I'll want 'em all!

I have to go, now. I've got to see who we can find for a true adventure yarn next month. It's a big job, picking out the one I think you'll want to hear from. Why don't you help a fellow out and make a few suggestions?

Old Adventurer

COLUMBIA'S JUNIOR ADVENTURERS CLUB

Movie Action Magazine Squadron, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I hereby apply for membership in Columbia's JUNIOR ADVENTURERS CLUB, and agree to obey all RULES AND REGULATIONS, and PLEDGE myself to keep the CLUB LAWS, which are as follows:

1. I must be Courageous and Honest.
2. Loyal to Every Test.
3. Helpful to the Stranger.
4. Friendly to All.
5. Courteous to All.
6. Kind to All.
7. Obedient to Parents and Teachers.
8. Cheerful in Work and Play.
9. Thrifty in All Things.
10. Brave in the Right.
11. Clean in Thought, in Speech and Deed.
12. Reverent to Our Maker.

Name .... Age ....

Address .... Birthday ....

Grade .... School ....

Favorite Local Theater ....

Sponsored by Old Adventurer

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 105

ANNIE OAKLEY

A Radio picture, with Barbara Stanwyck, Preston Foster, and Walter Abel.

When Buffalo Bill heard of Annie Oakley's sharp-shooting, he had to have her as one of the main attractions of his great Wild West Show. That is history, and it is also the background for an authentic moving picture about the most deadly riflewoman the world has ever known. Barbara Stanwyck plays Annie's rôle with unusual effect. The color of the period is well reflected in the film.

RECOMMENDED ESPECIALLY TO EVERY ONE WHO EVER SAW AND THRILLED TO THAT GRAND OLD FIGURE IN AMERICAN HISTORY—BUFFALO BILL!

STORM OVER THE ANDES

A Universal picture, with Jack Holt, Mona Barrie, Antonio Moreno, and Gene Lockhart.

Jack Holt's first picture for his new producers, Universal, brings back an old friend in Tony Moreno. It also revives the old theme of flying dare-devils. Plunging gaily into the midst of the war between Bolivia and Paraguay, aviator-of-fortune Holt does some fancy wingovers for his adopted cause. He winds up in love with his commander's wife, but the seemingly insoluble problem is simplified in a direct, manly, and highly satisfying manner.

A BETTER JACK HOLT PICTURE THAN WE HAVE SEEN FOR A LONG TIME.

ACCENT ON YOUTH

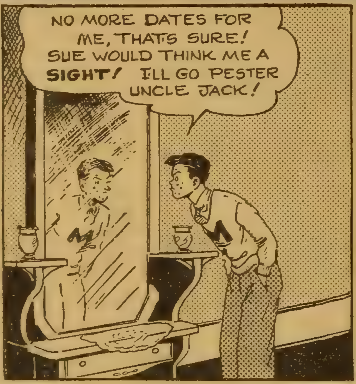
A Paramount picture, with Sylvia Sydney and Herbert Marshall.

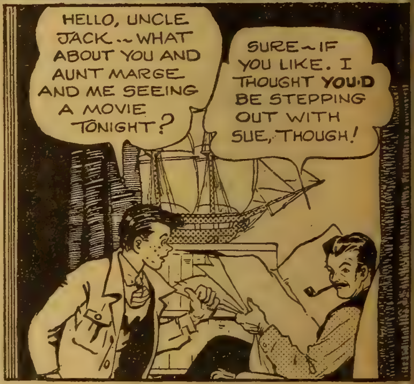
If it's smart romance you're after, try this one. Clever, if slightly high-brow, comedy about a playwright who thinks he's too old to fall in love with his secretary. She's got other ideas, though! Directed, by the way, by Charlie Ruggles' brother, Wesley Ruggles.

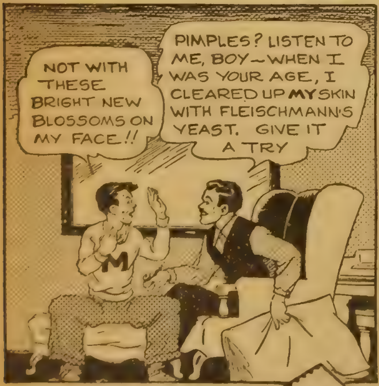
THE BEST OF ITS KIND THIS YEAR.

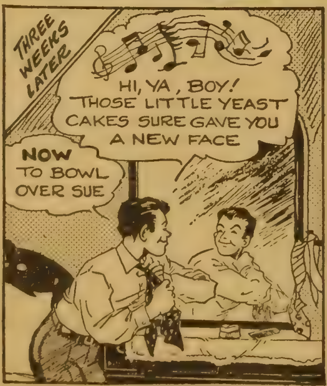
A FELLOW CAN'T GO PLACES WITH A SKIN LIKE THIS!

But Pete is soon pimple-free and "out stepping"


NO MORE DATES FOR ME, THAT'S SURE! SUE WOULD THINK ME A SIGHT! I'LL GO PESTER UNCLE JACK!


HELLO, UNCLE JACK -- WHAT ABOUT YOU AND AUNT MARGE AND ME SEEING A MOVIE TONIGHT?
SURE—IF YOU LIKE. I THOUGHT YOU'D BE STEPPING OUT WITH SUE, THOUGH!


NOT WITH THESE BRIGHT NEW BLOSSOMS ON MY FACE!!
PIMPLES? LISTEN TO ME, BOY—WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE, I CLEARED UP MY SKIN WITH FLEISCHMANN'S YEAST. GIVE IT A TRY


THREE WEEKS LATER
HI, YA, BOY! THOSE LITTLE YEAST CAKES SURE GAVE YOU A NEW FACE
NOW TO BOWL OVER SUE

Don't let adolescent pimples make a hermit out of YOU!

Between the ages 13 and 25, important glands develop. This causes disturbances throughout the body. And waste poisons in the blood irritate the skin, causing pimples. Clear these skin irritants out of your blood, with Fleischmann's Yeast. Then the pimples disappear. Eat 3 cakes a day, before meals, until skin clears.

Supplies Vitamins A B D G
FLEISCHMANN'S YEAST

—clears the skin

by clearing skin irritants out of the blood

Copyright, 1935, Standard Brands Incorporated

Posed by professional model

GIRLS WOULDN'T LOOK AT ME WHEN I WAS SKINNY

but...

Since I Gained 10 Pounds This New, Easy Way I Have All the Dates I Want

NOW there's no need for thousands to be "skinny" and friendless, even if they never could gain an ounce before. Here's a new, easy treatment for them that puts on pounds of solid, naturally attractive flesh—*in just a few weeks!*

Doctors now know that the real reason why great numbers of people find it hard to gain weight, and suffer with indigestion, constipation and a blemished skin, is that they do not get enough Vitamin B and iron in their daily food. Now with this new discovery which combines these two vital elements in little concentrated tablets, hosts of men and women have put on pounds of firm flesh—*in a very short time.*

Not only are thousands quickly gaining normal good-looking pounds, but also naturally clear skin, freedom from indigestion and constipation, new pep.

7 times more powerful

This amazing new product, Ironized Yeast, is made from special *ale yeast* imported from Europe, which is the richest known source of Vitamin B. By a new process this yeast is concentrated 7 times —*made 7 times more powerful.* Then it is *ironized* with 3 kinds of iron which strengthen the blood, add wonderful energy.

If you, too, are one of the many who simply need Vitamin B and iron to build them up, get these new Ironized Yeast tablets from your druggist at once. Day after day, as you take them, watch skinny limbs and flat chest round out to normal attractiveness. Skin clears to natural beauty, new health comes, you're a new person.

Results guaranteed

No matter how skinny and rundown you may be from lack of enough Vitamin B and iron, this marvelous new Ironized Yeast should build you up in a few short weeks as it has thousands. If you are not delighted with the results of the very first package, your money will be instantly refunded.

Only don't be deceived by the many cheaply prepared "Yeast and Iron" tablets sold in imitation of Ironized Yeast. These cheap counterfeits usually contain only the lowest grade of ordinary yeast and iron, and cannot possibly give the same results as the scientific Ironized Yeast formula. Be sure you get genuine Ironized Yeast. Look for "IY" stamped on each tablet.

Special FREE offer!

To start you building up your health right away, we make this absolutely FREE offer. Purchase a package of Ironized Yeast tablets at once, cut out the seal on the box and mail it to us with a clipping of this paragraph. We will send you a fascinating new book on health, "New Facts About Your Body." Remember, results guaranteed with the very first package — *or money refunded.* At all druggists. Ironized Yeast Co., Inc., Dept. 5011, Atlanta, Ga.

FAMOUS AVIATORS TELL WHY CAMELS ARE MILDER

Lieutenant Commander Frank Hawks, U. S. N. R. (*left*), holder of 214 speed records and the Harmon Trophy, comments: "As the athletes say, Camels are so mild they don't get the wind. And I've found they never upset my nerves. Camel must use choicer tobaccos."

"Camels don't get your Wind" Athletes say

"I smoke Camels all I want," says Colonel Roscoe Turner (*right*). "I enjoy Camels more. Because of their mildness they never tire my taste. And after smoking a Camel, I get a 'refill' in energy—a new feeling of vim and well-being."

"Get a Lift with a Camel"

"Camels refresh me so when I'm fatigued," says Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith (*above*), who made the record-breaking transpacific flight. "And they are so mild that I can smoke any number of Camels without throwing my nerves off key."

"They Never Tire Your Taste"

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- Camels are made from finer, MORE EXPENSIVE TOBACCOS—Turkish and Domestic—than any other popular brand.

(*Signed*) R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO COMPANY
Winston-Salem, N. C.

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JANUARY
1936

Movie action
MAGAZIN

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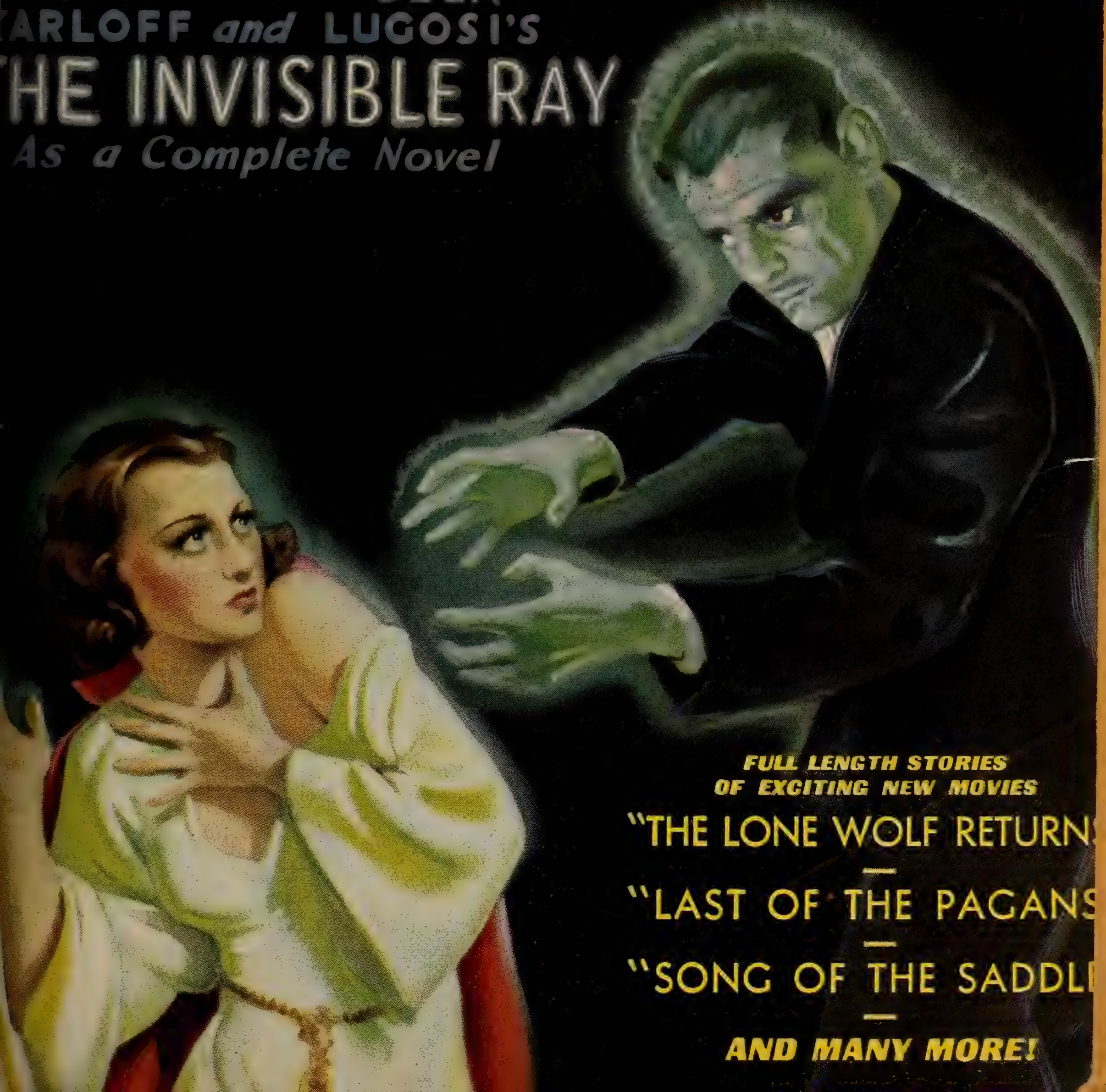
BORIS
ARLOFF *and* LUGOSI'S
BELA

HE INVISIBLE RAY

As a Complete Novel



FULL LENGTH STORIES OF EXCITING NEW MOVIES

"THE LONE WOLF RETURN

—

"LAST OF THE PAGAN

—

"SONG OF THE SADDL

—

AND MANY MORE!

Strike that COLD at the *source* before it gets serious!

G*argle Listerine*

to attack cold germs in mouth and throat

AFTER any long exposure to cold or wet weather, gargle Listerine when you get home. Medical records show that late-season football games, particularly, take their toll in health. Heavy chest colds often follow a day in the open. The prompt use of Listerine as a gargle when you reach home is a precautionary measure which may spare you such a serious complication.

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At the first symptom of a cold or sore throat, gargle full strength Listerine. If no improvement is shown, repeat the gargle in two hours. While an ordinary sore throat may yield quickly, a cold calls for more frequent gargling. Lambert Pharmacal Company, St. Louis, Mo.

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Volume I January, 1936 Number 3

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The Movie Round-up

RENDEZVOUS

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, with William Powell, Rosalind Russell, Sterling Halloway, and Lionel Atwill.

Good old Bill Powell of the U. S. Secret Service hands down a picture of spies and intrigue that has no precedent on the screen. It does the same things to you that "The Thin Man" did—tickles your funny bone and stands your hair on end at the same time. You'll probably wonder why you've never seen Rosalind Russell before. *We* did—in "Reckless." And we predict you'll notice her next time.

A BEAUTIFUL BUT DUMB DAME GETS IN THE WAY OF THE U. S. SECRET SERVICE, AND EVERYBODY HAS A SWELL TIME.

EAST OF JAVA

A Universal picture, with Charles Bickford, Frank Albertson, Elizabeth Young, and Leslie Fenton.

(See the December MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE for the full fictionized story of this picture.)

Charles Bickford was almost killed by a lion in the filming of this picture. He returned from the hospital to finish it, and made it one of the screen's most thrilling dramas. He plays the part of an American gangster who is cast away on an East African island with a small party of survivors. Among those who seek safety are the cargo of wild animals. Humans and animals, both being driven by hunger and fear, bring it to a smashing climax.

PROVING THAT A GANGSTER CAN BE A HERO WITHOUT GETTING SENTIMENTAL ABOUT IT.

THE NEW FRONTIER

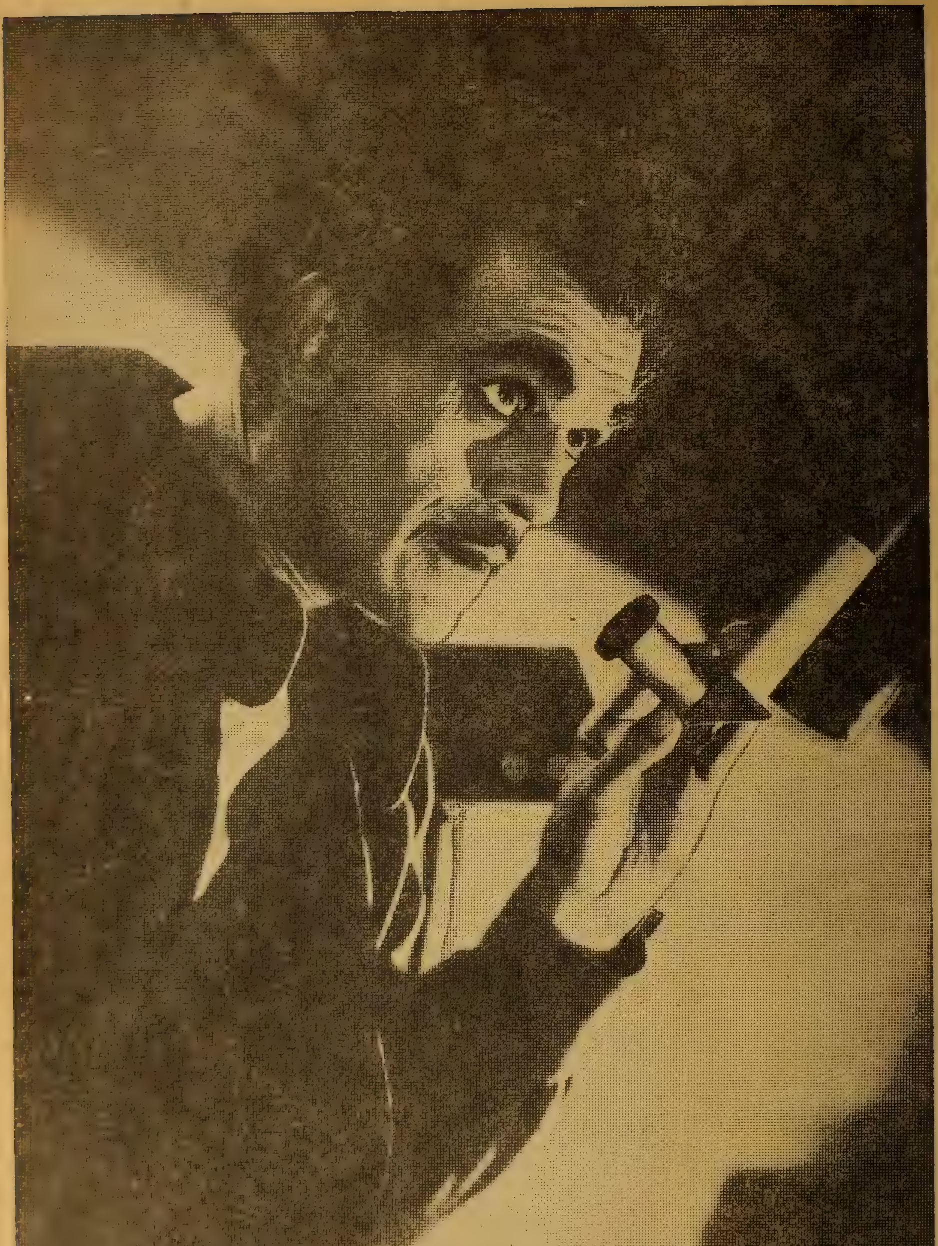
A Republic picture, with John Wayne, Muriel Evans, and Warner Richmond.

(See the December MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE for the complete fictionized story of this picture.)

John Wayne and his father are among the best wagon train leaders in the New West. Wayne arrives at Frontier to find his father killed. He decides to establish law and order, opposing the criminal element single handed. One of the screen's bloodiest gunfights ensues as an outlaw band comes to Wayne's rescue.

THE BEST WESTERN WE HAVE SEEN IN MANY A DAY!

Continued on page 47



He devoted his life to wrenching from the heavens the secret of the strange behavior of that specimen of radium.

THE INVISIBLE RAY

Cursed with the Touch of Death, the greatest genius the world has ever known goes mad!

THERE was a new devil walking the Mountains of the Moon. In a land where the sultry dark was thick with devils, his like had never been seen before. Some said he was a man. Some said no. He was dressed all in armor. His face was made of glass. He worked in Hell. In the night, in the day, it mattered not, he went down into that blazing pit of fire and came up again unharmed. A great dog watched by his side. It never seemed to sleep. No one could creep near the devil and not be seen by his dog.

That was how it seemed to black Africa. That was what the talking drums of the natives said as they thumped the messages about this strange thing over the desolate mountain crests to the distant villages. Only the few natives who formed his safari knew for certain that Doctor Rukh was a man. Even they had no inkling of what he was about as, with flesh creeping cold with terror, they watched him go down over the jagged edge of the fiery maw of the crater formed by the meteor of which he alone in the world had known—only he—and had come to find.

As he toiled in that infernal pit, Doctor Rukh looked as unearthly as a being on the mountains of the real moon, instead of a scientist at work in the mountains of that name in Africa. He wore a helmet of lead, with a glass vision piece in the front. His jacket was lead. His hands were sheathed in heavy metal gauntlets. He sat suspended on a plank fastened to a rope. The rope was wound about a windlass at the top of the pit, near his tent and work table.

One day, after weeks of suspicious and futile watching, the excited Negroes saw him take something from the wall of the pit which they called Hell and put it in a little metal box. At his shout they pulled him up. He rushed to his work table. Waving them back from him, he gazed at the earthy object he had brought up.

His eyes gloated, for this meant triumph, world control, fame! He had won! He had outwitted those who were planning to trick him—Sir Francis Stevens and Doctor Benet. They had scoffed, called him crazy, and now he had proved his theory. He was the master now!

DOCTOR JANOS RUKH was a very strange man. The only one who really understood him was his blind mother. She lived with him and his wife Diane, a beautiful girl of twenty-five, in their old castle high in the Carpathian Mountains of old Austria. Here Rukh had worked at his weird experiments until he came to Africa.

As a youth he had studied in England. One day as he worked in the university laboratory, he had observed that the atoms in a specimen of radium became suddenly agitated. Rukh developed a theory that, at that moment, a meteor from outer space, bearing some unknown element more powerful than radium, had fallen in Africa. His fellow students, led by Sir Francis Stevens, had ridiculed his theory and, to their own satisfaction, disproved it. In a rage, he left the university and never returned.

High on the Carpathian crags in his castle home, he devoted his life to wrenching from the heavens the secret of the strange behavior of that specimen of radium. He built an astronomical observatory with an immensely powerful telescope. In another room of his laboratory was his ray machine. Rays from strange constellations, caught by his telescope, could be transferred electrically to this machine and then flashed on the huge domed ceiling of the room. It had the effect of a gigantic motion picture.

Working here, forgotten by the world, Rukh caught at last a ray from the distant constellation of Andromeda. As his mother helped him transfer it to the projector she was stricken blind by the powerful ray!

That did not stop Rukh. He went on until he found what he wanted. Then against his mother's advice, he invited Sir Francis Stevens, and Doctor Benet, world-famous astro-chemist of the University of Paris and scoffer at the Rukh theory, to see the result of his experiments!

THEY arrived at the castle on a night of terrible storm: Sir Francis, bearded and bespectacled—his tall and hawk-nosed wife, Lady Arabella, a noted African explorer and travel writer—their nephew, Ronald Drake, a handsome young big-game hunter about the same age as Diane—and Benet, smiling sardonically behind his monocle. Just as Diane and Drake felt friendly toward each other at once, so did an instant enmity arise between Rukh and Benet. Neither man made any effort to conceal his dislike.

After Rukh had informed the party that he had read they were going to Africa for astro-chemical research and had taken this last opportunity to prove his theory before them, he showed them Venus and Saturn on his huge telescope, and then Andromeda, a whirling mass, dotted with pin points of brilliant light.

"Now," said Rukh tensely, "I will do something you have never dreamed possible. I will use Andromeda as a mirror—a huge celestial mirror! Then I shall focus on a single ray of light reflected by Andromeda—a ray which has traveled through space for millions of years. I shall intercept it at various and regular intervals. And what you shall see, projected above you, will be a sight never before seen by man!"

He donned his metal armor and helmet with the glass eye-piece, and invited his guests and Diane into the laboratory. There he seated them on a raised platform at the side of the room, behind a heavy, glass, protective screen. He went alone to his ray projector and climbed the platform to the controls.

He pulled the rheostat handle. Gradually the room became dark. Then he began throwing switches. A faint, diffused light appeared on the ceiling. Then it seemed as if the dome disappeared and Andromeda came into view, just as if the ceiling were the open sky!

Other constellations followed in a

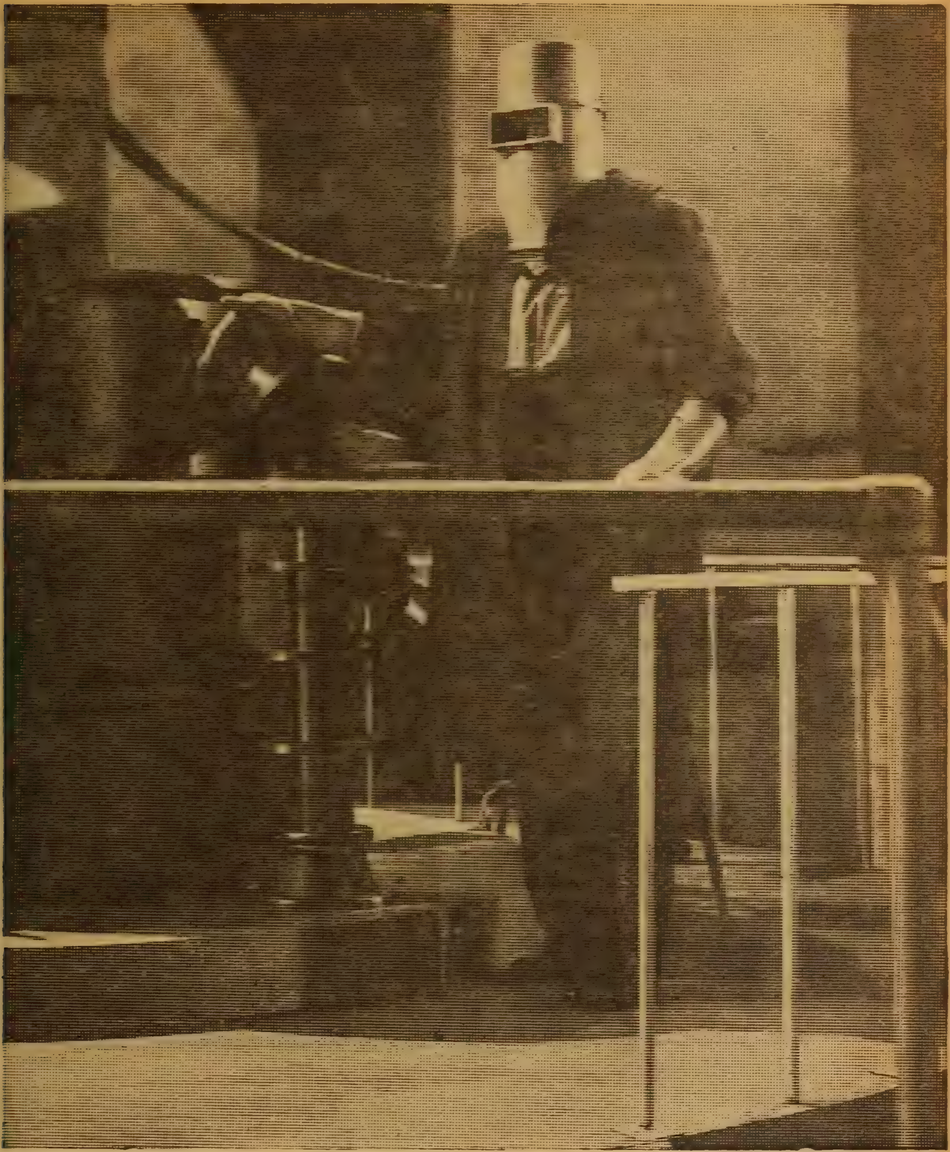
THE CAST

BORIS KARLOFF	Dr. Janos Rukh
BELA LUGOSI	Dr. Benet
FRANCES DRAKE	Diane Rukh
Frank Lawton	Ronald Drake
Walter Kingsford	Sir Francis Stevens

Directed by Lambert Hillyer
Original Story by
Howard Higgins and Douglas Hodges
Screenplay by John Colton
An Edmund Grainger Production

UNIVERSAL
PRODUCTION

A fictionization of the Universal Picture of the same title.



He went alone to his ray projector and climbed the platform to the controls.

blazing, whirling fantasy of light. The pinwheel-like mass steadied and out of it a gigantic sun swam into vision, appearing to revolve in the blackness of universal ether. It grew brighter, seeming to revolve in the auditorium itself as Rukh's voice explained that this was our sun as it had appeared thousands of centuries before!

His touch on a different switch brought another star flaming forward from a dot of light to a huge burning ball. As it drew near, the first sun's surface grew greatly agitated. Great fiery tides were raised on it. It seemed to pulsate with fear and fury like a live thing. It shot forth great fingers of fiery atmosphere as though to tear the enemy apart. The enemy replied in kind. The terrible forces of gravity had been let loose! One great body was pulling on the other!

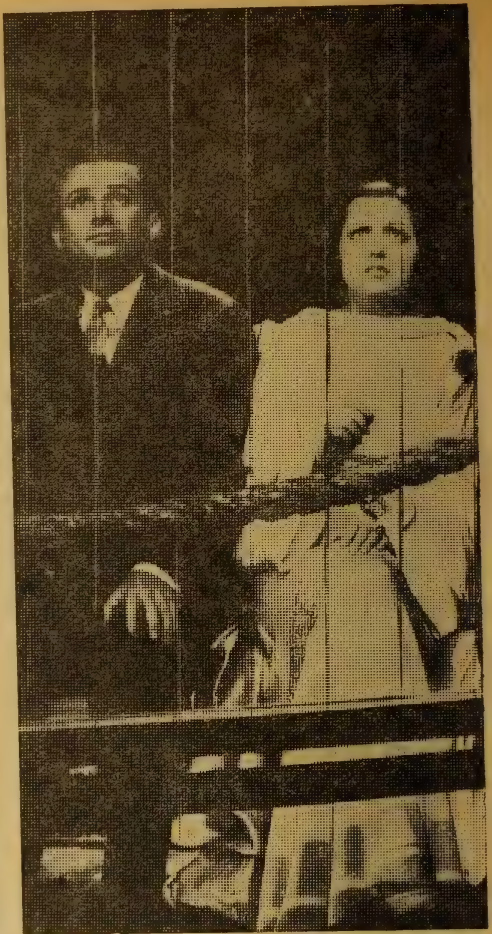
On and on came the other star. The tidal fingers of the sun continued to increase in height. Then the newcomer seemed to seize one of the sun's fingers and drag it into its fiery maw. There was a terrible tussle, but the second star outdid the sun in gravitational pull. A stream of matter shot from the sun and joined the other. Just as it seemed the sun would be swallowed up, the other star passed on. Our sun, elongated like a pear from the pull of the dreadful struggle, began to assume its proper shape.

It was soon itself, save for a thin dribble of matter or filament of fiery spray which began to condense into detached drops, much as a cloud of steam condenses into drops of water. These fiery drops, however did not fall back into the sun. The pull of the now receding star had set them in motion and they began to revolve around the parent body. It was Creation!

RUKH pulled another switch and the scene dissolved and faded from the view of the awestruck watchers. Where a moment before a battle of suns, fought millions of years ago, had been recreated by a light ray, there was now only a blank dome. Rukh faced Stevens.

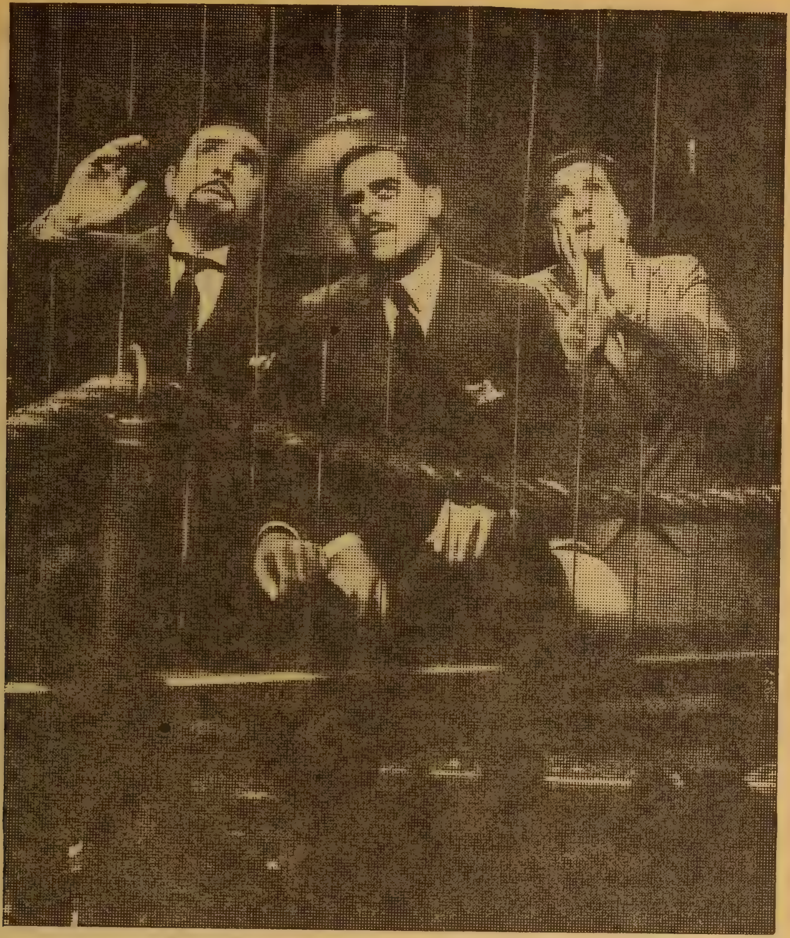
"Years ago, Sir Francis," he said, "I voiced a belief that a great meteor containing some element more powerful than radium, had recently struck an uncharted spot on the continent of Africa. I will show you how I know this to be a fact!"

He turned a dial. The planet, Earth, bathed in its atmosphere, swam into the scene through meteor-laden space as a ship would move through a rubbish-laden sea. From all sides, specks of light fell toward it, to be instantly burned up in the atmosphere. The Earth curved away in the distance. Then, with a heart-stopping speed, a meteor glowing with incredible brilliance flashed across the scene hurtling after the retreating Earth! The onlookers were swept along with the dazzling visitor.



The Earth loomed larger and larger. Continents took form through the hazy atmosphere. As the scientific party swept on with the great meteor, our planet filled the huge dome.

Then Africa became the point of attraction for the dazzling meteor. In quick order, their views of the continent dissolved from huge outline to a relief map, then to a topographical survey of the central part; and finally to an aerial view of a rugged mountain range. They were tumbling down from a dizzy height!



They were tumbling down from a dizzy height! Falling earthward with a flaming ball of fire!

Falling earthward with a flaming ball of fire! Falling—falling—falling!

Lady Arabella gave a piercing scream as they plunged after the meteor which buried itself near the Mountains of the Moon with a detonation that seemed to shatter the laboratory. Startled and incredulous, Rukh's guests gaped at the yawning crevice belching smoke, into which they seemed to have been plunged.

Later, when they had regained their calm in the quiet of the drawing room, they invited Rukh to accompany them to Africa and locate this meteoric deposit of an unknown element. This was the chance he was waiting for—recognition by men of science! He was about to accept when, sharply, the voice of his mother rang across the quiet chamber.

"Do not go, my son! You will find your element—and unhappiness, too!"

Rukh thought he knew what she meant. But did men of mud like Sir Francis and Benet think they could conceal from eyes like his, able to pierce the very heavens, the greed in their own eyes? They wanted to steal his discovery from him. What of that? He would go with them and use their own plans against them! He would outwit them all!

ONE morning, months later in the heart of Africa, Sir Francis and Benet awoke full of confidence. That day Rukh was going to lead them to his meteor. They went to his tent. There, rage gripped them. Rukh had stolen away in the night with his native bearers to find his meteor, alone, leaving no trace behind!

Seated by his work table on the edge of the meteor's crater many miles away, Rukh smiled to think of their disappointment. His only note had been one sent in by runner to Diane who had also come to Africa, and that had told nothing of his position. He gloated over the specimen he had taken from the pit.

"There's power—power the world has never seen!" he muttered. "But first it must be harnessed. And I must harness it!"

He took a strange-looking device—quite like a large cigar-shaped camera—from one of the boxes stacked near by. He adjusted it upon a tripod. Made to order in Vienna before the party had left, it had been especially designed by Rukh to utilize an unknown but powerful force to emanate from an element more potent than radium. He called it his "concentrator."

As he readied the device, angry voices broke through his thoughts. He looked up impatiently. Grouped together, frowning at him sullenly, he saw his twelve native safari porters. The headman approached. It looked like trouble. Rukh struck first.

"Well, what do you want?" he challenged.

"Safari boys wanchum go away this place." The headman pointed to the crater. "They no likum."

"They want to leave me, do they?" Rukh sprang to his feet. He faced the giant black, chin thrust out. He pointed to a sharp craggy pinnacle of stone in the distance. "Do you see that rock?" he shouted. "Keep your eyes on that rock. Tell the boys to do so, too."

He lifted the canvas cover from his concentrator. Opening the top, he transferred the sample of the new element from the small box to a small leaden bottle. This he put in the concentrator after carefully donning again his helmet and gloves.

"Watch!" he called sharply to the natives.

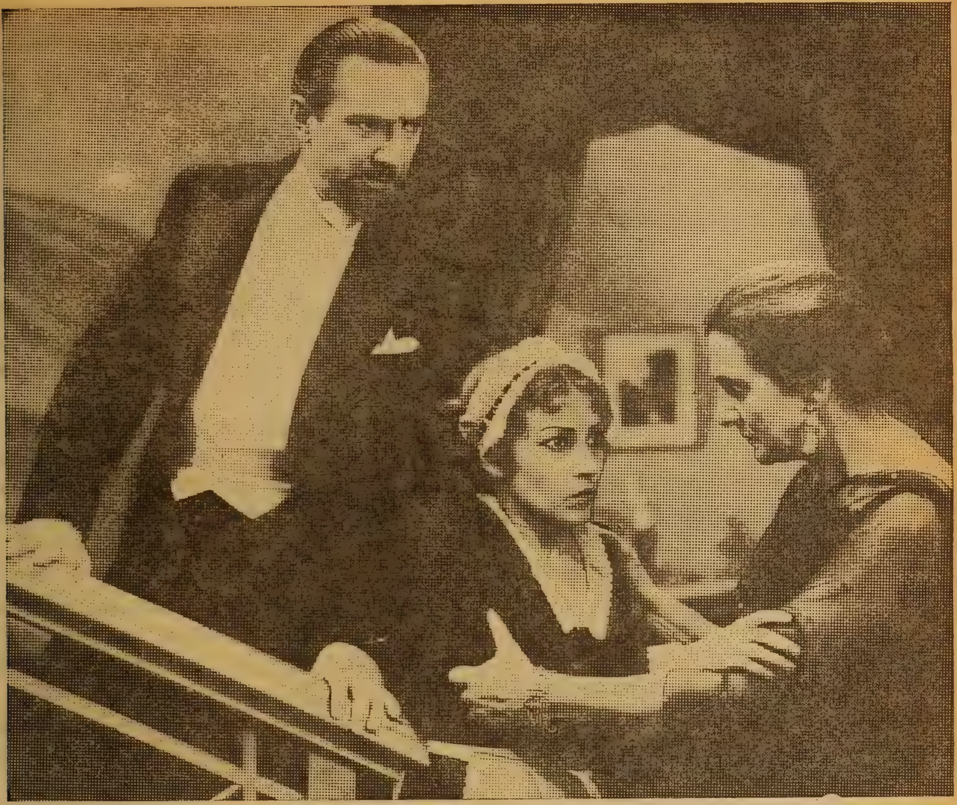
He focused the concentrator on the rock. He pulled a slide. There was no visible ray, no flash—only a low humming like a distant airplane. Then he turned the control wheel. Suddenly it happened. Before their eyes in broad daylight the solid rock disappeared! One instant it was a mighty crag—the next instant, a little heap of ashes scattered by the breeze!

Rukh turned to the frightened bearers. "You can all go if you like," he said, "but you won't go far. All that will be left of you will be little piles of ash—like that." Then, as they babbled their promises to stay, "Very well, get to work."

Without another glance at them, he removed the new element which he mentally called "Radium X," from the concentrator. He whipped off his helmet and gloves. He turned once more to estimate the wreckage of the rock.

But as he did so, his right hand dropped over the open gate in the top of the concentrator. A little feather of smoke curled up through the open door and wreathed about his bare fingers. He clasped his hands and passed them over his face in a gesture of fatigue. And from that moment there *was* a devil on the Mountains of the Moon! That fatal instant changed a genius into a human engine of destruction!

EVENING was approaching. Rukh rested till dusk. Then he went into the tent to his supper. He ate absently, lost in his thoughts. As he finished, darkness fell.



Lady Arabella seized and shook the bewildered girl. "Speak, you fool! What is it?"

When the native boy came to remove the dishes, the youngster shrieked in horror. There in the pitch darkness, floated a man's face, glowing with unearthly light—and two glowing hands!

At the boy's scream he saw his fiery fingers. He sprang up, staggered to his mirror on the canvas wall. There on the glass burned a devil's mask of flame, barely recognizable as his face! Poisoned! Doomed in his hour of victory!

No, no! It must be a dream. He lit the lamp, and stared again at himself in the glass. Yes, it was a dream! It was! His hands and face looked normal. But perhaps that was just because of the lamplight! He thrust his hand out through the tent flap into the dark. *The hand glowed.*

With a tortured groan, Rukh slumped on his cot staring at his fingers. His faithful dog, alarmed, came to comfort him. Rukh patted the dog. With a choked sigh, the dog dropped dead at Rukh's feet! He stared at the body. Then came a voice outside the tent door that made his skin crawl with terror!

"Janos—Janos——"

It was Diane, his wife!

EVER since they had met on the night of Rukh's demonstration in the Carpathian castle, Diane Rukh and Ronald Drake had been drawn to each other. Diane admired Janos, but she had never really loved him. She married him to please her father. But Diane was a thoroughbred. She refused to give way to her love for Ronald or to welcome his love for her.

When Janos had sent her his note from the crater by runner, he had not asked her to come to him. But he had unconsciously made her feel he needed her. Instead of sending back a note with her husband's messenger she had followed the guide herself.

"What are you doing here?" he screamed from within his tent. "Go away at once! At once! Do you hear?"

As she heard Rukh's wild command. Diane felt surer than ever that he needed her.

"Janos! You must be ill!" she replied. "What's happened to you? It's been weeks since you left. Don't you want to see me?"

"No, I don't want to see you—here This is no place for you!"

"My place is where you are," Diane answered simply, fighting back her hurt at his words. "I won't be a bother. I've brought my own things with me."

"I suppose you'll have to stay tonight," Rukh answered. "You'll find my headman back where the fires are. He'll make you a shelter. But I want you out of here the first thing in the morning."

His tortured ears heard her footfalls go away. He looked through the tent flap after her. That beautiful girl he loved so madly, he could never caress again! It was almost beyond human power for him to watch her go. His hands clenched. If a finger of those hands touched one of hers, she would die. For a long while Rukh sat thinking. Then he stood up, his decision made. He put on his helmet—his gloves——

DOCTOR BENET worked in his tent at the main camp. It was nearly midnight. There was no sound, only the tunking of the native drums throbbing in the silence. And from the night's stillness he heard a hoarse whisper—his name!

He opened the tent flap. A man staggered in. The man's clothes were literally torn to shreds from running through the brush. He carried a helmet and gloves of metal in his hand. It was Doctor Janos Rukh!

Rukh drew the horrified Benet into the darkness with him. He showed the other what had happened to him—his fiery face, his hands. He begged Benet, as the world's greatest astro-chemist, to cure him. Benet told him the truth. Nothing could help him but the antidote which could only be derived from the radium itself.

Rukh looked deep into the eyes of his enemy. He tried to decide. This was the showdown! If he gave Benet his sample of Radium X, his secret would be lost to him. Benet would steal it. If he did not give it, he would never live to complete his experiments and harness Radium X to heal as well as to destroy.

For his own life he cared nothing. In itself, his life was unimportant. But he must live to work—to study—to give his discovery to aid mankind. He took the chance! He handed Benet the sample of Radium X.

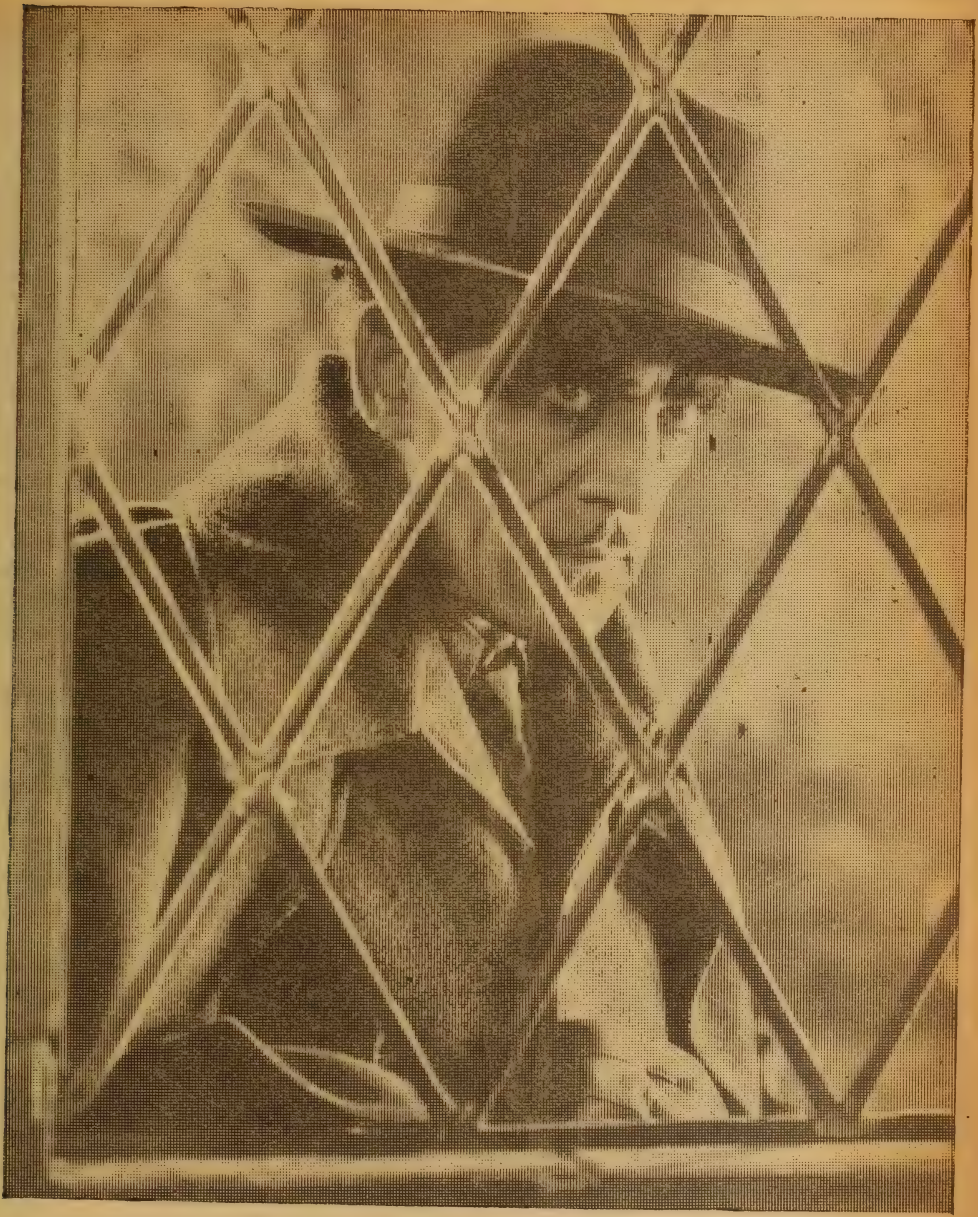
By midnight Benet had his injection ready. An hour later Rukh's body no longer shone.

"I—I—can touch people now?" he faltered. He put out his shaking hand to Benet.

"Yes," Benet took his hand, "but remember what I have told you. Nothing can ever cure you. At best, your state of poisoning can only be checked—suspended. Now that the counter-active has gone into your blood stream, you can only live if you use it at regular intervals each day, all the days of your life."

"Yes. Yes. And if I exceed that time—what happens?"

"Your body becomes again the deadly machine it was. Your touch will kill! Shortly after that, you will become deadly to yourself as well. If you cannot get hold of the counter-active in time, you will literally crumble to ash."



Through one of the church windows, a man watched the ceremony. . . .
His eyes were like daggers!

"But after each injection I shall be immune?" Rukh cried pitifully. "To all intents, normal?"

"I don't know enough yet to say what effect the violent surcharge of poison and antidote will have upon the brain." Benet paused. "What do you plan to do now?"

"Get back to my camp, complete my test and return here as soon as possible," said Rukh. "Tell no one of this."

"I promise."

DOCTOR BENET kept that promise. Rukh did not keep his. For months he did not return from his crater camp. Benet at length sought him there, led by native drum messages to the secret spot. Rukh greeted him excitedly.

"Man! I've harnessed it at last! I could crumble up a city a thousand miles away! I could destroy a nation—all nations——"

"You may have harnessed its powers to destroy," Benet commented, "but have you harnessed them to heal?"

"That will come later," Rukh's eyes gleamed wildly, "when I devise a filter to curb its power. I am far from ready yet to give it to the world, but it's mine to experiment with—mine!"

Benet sipped the glass of whisky which Rukh poured for him. He wanted to gain time before he spoke again. He gazed into the wild face before him half with contempt, half with pity. How was he to tell this man what had happened to him since he had left the main camp? How was he to give him the terrible letter that reposed in his pocket? Still he had come to tell the bitter truth. It must be told. Benet tried to keep his voice calm as he said:

"Stevens and I feared that would be your attitude. That was why we decided your discovery was too important to be in the hands of one man alone."

"What do you mean?" Rukh sprang up like a tiger.

"Stevens is now on his way to the International Scientific Congress which opened at Paris last month. He is taking with him the specimen you left with me."

"You thieves! You thieves!" The words shrieked out.

Benet had been prepared for an outburst from Rukh, but nothing like this. The scientist tore his hair and gnashed his teeth. Benet watched his hands. What if they should dart to the deadly concentrator there beside him? He must keep him from that.

"We couldn't wait for you forever, Rukh," he said. "Your wife has been quite ill. We decided it was best to break up camp and go."

"My wife," groaned Rukh, "what have you done with her?"

"She's on her way to Europe with Sir Francis and Lady Arabella," Benet told him watching the concentrator warily. "I join them at Lake Nyanza." He reached into his pocket and produced an envelope. "She asked me to give you this letter."

Benet could cold-bloodedly rob Rukh of his discovery for his own advancement in science, but he felt sorry for his rival now! The agony in the eyes that read that letter!

"She doesn't love me," sobbed Rukh. "She doesn't believe I love her. She loves some one else." His tortured eyes sought Benet's. "Drake?" The name burst out like a gunshot.

Benet nodded affirmatively. Then he drew back in terror. Rukh seized the concentrator that could blast rocks to ashes. He turned the muzzle on Benet. His finger tightened on the slide. Kill! Kill! Then he slumped down at the table. He could not kill. Not yet——

"Go away, Benet," he muttered. "Go—before I——"

He was not yet insane enough to kill the man who had saved his life, even though that man had robbed him of his happiness, his fame.

FEVERISHLY he pushed his studies. Of Diane he dared not think; only of the work. He finished his African experiments and returned to his castle laboratory in Carpathia. There he brought his researches to an end. But would it work? Would it heal? Janos Rukh staked all on a dangerous gamble. Risking everything in a desperate attempt to test the curative powers of Radium X, he chose his own mother for his first subject. And he won! Blind for years, she was at last able to see!

Sir Francis Stevens was dead. His eyes held a look so dreadful that neither Lady Arabella nor Doctor Benet could bear to meet it.

Like a child, she counted her fingers. She could not believe that she was really seeing them again. She clasped her son in her arms, too happy to speak at first. He, her boy, had harnessed Radium X to heal!

Then he told her that he was going to Paris, and all her joy faded. She felt that same thrill of evil as when he had said he was going to Africa. She begged him not to go—not to Paris. There was tragedy awaiting him there. Death. She could see it!

Janos remembered how true her words had been on that previous occasion. He removed a parchment sealed in a tight roll from his metal safety box, and gave it to his mother.

"In case I do find tragedy," he told her, "I leave my secret with you. It is all there. More power than man ever possessed. Power to heal and destroy. Guard it for me."

Rukh could hardly wait for his train to reach Paris. Triumph would be his. Benet and Sir Francis could never have pushed their experiments with his speed. He would laugh at them!

The train rolled into the station and Rukh bounded out. There were many things for him to do at once—rooms—appropriate clothes. Then he rushed to Benet's laboratory. He burst in, to find Benet working over a little blind girl. Janos recognized the technique at once. It was his—his—something he could not mistake. Benet was using Radium X! The world crashed in ruins on Janos. He heard Benet, unaware of his presence, tell the child she was cured. As she left, Benet turned. He saw Rukh—met those icy eyes——

Janos Rukh was surprised that he felt no rage. He simply felt disappointment, and a steel hardness come over his mind. "This man has robbed me of achievement. He must die." It hammered in his brain. He began to laugh, terrible, devastating laughter. It frightened Benet. Rukh saw that.

"Forgive me," he said, "I am laughing because it seems, as usual, that I am a little late."

Hastily Benet assured him that this was not so. Paris was waiting to honor him. Rukh had won the Nobel Prize. How was he? How did he feel—the poison?

"The counter-active is still effective," snapped Janos. Then his voice broke. "And Diane? What of her?"

"Very well," Benet assured him. "She has become Lady Arabella's secretary."

"She and Drake plan to marry, of course?" Rukh forced the words out.

"They are in love, but she declares she'll do nothing until she hears from you."

"She'll hear of me shortly!" Rukh knew the hell-fire that was blazing in his eyes. He must hide it. He turned his head, "I shan't stand in the way of her happiness," he murmured.

His face did not betray the laughter in his bitter heart as he saw Benet believed him.

"You see I was right, Rukh," said Benet as Janos was leaving. "Your discovery is too great for one man to control."

Rukh shook his head slowly. "Some day you will understand that I am still the only man who can control it fully," he said. The door closed softly behind him.

BENET could not shake off the feeling that there had been something very ominous behind those last words. He was right. A sane man had entered his laboratory, but a madman had gone away. Outwardly Janos Rukh seemed calm and normal; inwardly his mind was a caldron of boiling fury. Frozen fire! Under the repeated blows of fate his reason had been shattered. "Death—death—revenge—kill—death—death—revenge—kill!" went round and round in his mind like the spokes of a wheel, as he wandered the Paris streets.

The morning Paris papers carried an item which caused Doctor Benet and Sir Francis Stevens to breathe easier:

"DISCOVERER OF RADIUM X
FOUND DEAD"

> "His face and throat burned beyond recognition, the body of Dr. Janos Rukh discoverer of Radium X, was found in his apartment early to-day——"

The two scientists were now secure in their stolen laurels. Ronald Drake was jubilant; now he could marry his Diane!

A few weeks later, the young couple were married according to Church of England rites. Only a few friends were there. Through one of the church windows a man watched the ceremony, crouching like a beast about to spring.

His eyes were like daggers. He looked like Janos Rukh. But then, Rukh was dead—dead and buried! As the wedding party drove away, the man went to a lodging house across the street. From the landlady, he rented a room facing the church. Every step the man took as he prowled about the room—his eyes glaring at the church—his hands, the way he moved—would have convinced an observer that he was Janos Rukh. The answer was not as simple as it might seem. But the truth was that he *was* Janos Rukh!

Janos Rukh had not died. Another man had died in his place. It all had started at a Parisian coffee stall the night following Rukh's visit to Benet—a man at the bar—his strange similarity to Rukh. As soon as he saw him, Rukh's plan of revenge had crystallized in his mind. Till then it had been vague. He saw the man was poor and hungry. What would trap him? Food, wine! He had invited the tramp to his apartment for supper, the best. Then midnight struck.

Rukh had not taken his antidote for the poison that day. He had forgotten in the excitement. At midnight, he knew his body had become as deadly as a bomb. He had struck the derelict, killed him, disfigured the body beyond recognition, dressed it in his clothes, and left it to take his place while he had disappeared. That was all weeks ago. And now—he would strike again!

THE church across the street from his lodging was called The Church of the Six Saints. Its wall opposite his window bore six niches. In each niche stood a statue of a saint. Six statues! And there had been six of them in that fatal party which had taken Rukh to Africa. The coincidence struck him with such force that each statue took on in his imagination the face of one of that party. First, Sir Francis. Next, Lady Arabella. Then Benet, Drake and Diane. And last—himself.

He glared at the first statue with merciless, mad eyes.

"Sir Francis Stevens, thief!"

His voice rang like a death sentence. But Sir Francis did not hear. He was busy in his laboratory working on the Radium X he had stolen from Rukh. He came home toward evening. He and his wife were to dine at home with Doctor Benet and then go to a play. Sir Francis lay down to rest a while.

Gray dusk fell softly. Then it was dark. In the drawing room by the fire Lady Arabella and the doctor sipped cocktails. She sent the butler to wake Sir Francis.

"Did you ever see anybody so incredibly happy as Diane and Ronald when they started off on their honeymoon?" she smiled at Doctor Benet.

"I hope they will be happy," he answered. There was strange foreboding in his voice.

Then it came, chilling the blood! A woman's scream—from upstairs!

They rushed into the hall. Down the stairs, her legs trembling beneath her, tottered the maid, Celeste. She screamed again and again, madly. Lady Arabella seized and shook the bewildered girl.

"Speak you fool! What is it?"

The girl could not speak. Her eyes were sickly pools of terror! The butler rushed down the stairs. He was white with fear, also, but he at least could speak.

"Doctor Benet, sir, come at once! Sir Francis——"

THEY found Sir Francis Stevens stretched on his bed. He was dressed for a dinner he would never taste. He was dead. His eyes were staring wide. They held a look so dreadful that neither Lady

Arabella nor Doctor Benet could bear to meet it. They had to turn away.

"What hideous thing did he see, do you think?" faltered Lady Arabella.

Doctor Benet fought off his thoughts. The dead stay dead, and Janos Rukh was dead.

"The police must be sent for at once," he said as calmly as he could, "but before they come I'd like to try an experiment. It must be done before the eye tissues glaze. Have I your permission?"

"Yes."

"Is there an ultra-violet camera in the house?" Benet asked.

"Yes," she answered, "in his laboratory."

Benet photographed Sir Francis Stevens' eyes. He developed the plate. He drew it from the developing acid. He held it against a strong light and gazed into those terrible eyes. Then he saw something terrifying, maddening! He grasped a magnifying glass. The glass enlarged those awful eyes. He saw a tiny face there, flaming from the awful retinas like the face of a devil. It was the face of Janos Rukh!

"But it can't be!" Benet would not believe it. "Rukh's dead——"

His fingers trembled, dropped the plate on the floor. It shattered to bits.

And that was what happened to the statue on the church that Rukh had identified with Sir Francis. Only a little heap of ashes lay in the niche. That was Rukh's macabre joke. He had destroyed the statue with his concentrator.

He laughed wildly as crowds stared at the empty niche. One gone! He gazed at the next statue, the woman saint.

"Lady Arabella Stevens," he muttered as it took on her face to his imagination. "Lady Arabella Stevens, the matchmaker——"

NEXT evening Paris rocked to another crime, another horror! The famous woman author and huntress was found dead in her bed. Doctor Benet was summoned by Drake who had returned to Paris with his bride at the news of Sir Francis' death. He rushed to the house. The police were there. Diane, sobbing, stood beside the Medical Examiner of Paris. He stooped over the still figure of Lady Arabella, covered by a sheet.

It was night. The lamps were lit. Benet, as soon as he heard the news, had given strict instructions that the Medical Examiner and his helpers wear insulated gloves before touching the body. Why was that? they asked. Benet signaled Drake to take Diane away. Then, without touching the body, he explained his strange instructions to the Examiner and the Chief of the Surete.

He turned out the light. Luminous finger-marks gleamed on Lady Arabella's throat. There was an awed silence as Benet switched on the light again.

"You observe those finger marks can't be seen in the light," he said.

"Phosphorus, perhaps," offered the Chief of the Surete, feebly.

"No, Radium X," Benet corrected. "Inflicted by the grasp of some one infected with the poison."

He told the astonished officers the story of Janos Rukh. When he had finished, no one spoke for a moment. Then the Surete Chief said:

"You believe that the man who was buried as Doctor Rukh was not Rukh?"

"I believe that Rukh is alive and in Paris! I believe Paris is at the mercy of a madman whose body is an engine of destruction!" Benet hit the table with his flat palm. "I talked with Rukh's mother on the telephone a little while ago. It is also her belief that Rukh is alive. She is starting for Paris at once."

Next night the men met in Benet's study. The second statue on the church had been reduced to ashes. Their faces were grave as they took chairs around the doctor's lamp.

Drake was with them. He told how the statue had melted before a crowd of horrified spectators. What were they going to do?

"Diane and I were married in that church," he said, "and there were six of us in Africa." He turned sharply to Benet, his eyes flashing eagerly. "Do you suppose Rukh's crazy brain drew some analogy between that fact and the six figures of the Saints of the Church?"

"He has killed two of us," Benet agreed, "and destroyed two of the six figures."

"A woman and a man in each case." added Drake.

"You and your wife must go into seclusion immediately," the Surete Chief cut in sharply. "Also you, Doctor Benet, while I comb Paris for this madman."

"It might be simpler to get him to come here!"

DRAKE'S suggestion was too daring. It struck them all speechless. Then the chief asked sarcastically, turning in his chair to face the young explorer and big-game hunter:

"How do you propose to do this? Ask him for dinner?"

"Not quite," Drake said evenly, "but that's the general idea. Let the newspapers give out a story that the three remaining survivors of our African expedition are leaving Paris immediately for an unknown destination. But before departing there is to be a meeting here." He turned to Benet. "What would draw him, doctor?"

Benet had heard the proposal of his young friend Drake with the keenest interest. Nothing else could solve their terrible problem. Nothing!

"A lecture concerning my recent experiments with Radium X—and a chance to reach you and me," he suggested.

The Surete Chief approved the plan, finally. This would draw the devil in, but what about Benet and Drake? They'd be killed, both of them.

"You are both willing to take such a risk?" he asked.

"Yes," Benet said promptly. "We can announce that it is for a limited number of scientists only."

"Is it fair to expose others to this danger," asked Drake.

Benet brushed the objection aside.

"There are only two people he wants to destroy. Two, or perhaps three——"

"My men can mingle with your guests," the Surete Chief assured them.

"Exactly," Doctor Benet agreed. "I will set the hour of midnight for the lecture. At that time his luminosity will be strong, as he will surely delay taking the counter-active, hoping for a chance to use his deadliness upon Drake and me."

"How shall we recognize and capture him?" inquired the chief.

"At midnight bolt all the doors and darken the entire house," was Benet's instruction. "His face and hands will appear like phosphorus, regardless of any disguise."

"But if he touches any one——" The chief's tone showed his apprehension at this rendezvous with a murderous madman in a pitch-dark room.

"They die," answered the doctor dryly.

BENET was right. But death struck before any of them expected. They sent out their invitations. They announced the hour for the lecture. They baited their trap. Then they waited. Around the doctor's residence the Surete Chief threw a cordon of his best men. Some of them were hidden. Others were in plain sight. Gendarmes in uniform were posted at the gates to inspect the invitations of all the guests.

One thing Drake and Benet could not arrange. They could not arrange the weather. The night of the lecture came. Paris was blanketed in a thick mist. It turned into rain as the hours passed. Cabs crept through the streets. The boats on the Seine hooted through the ghostly fog. Very few people were out.

Through the rain came an old man.

He was well prepared for the storm with umbrella and galoshes. He looked what he was—a scientist on the way to the lecture. Behind him shuffled a shrouded figure. It seemed to trail him. If he slowed his pace, it paused. He turned a corner, the figure followed. It came closer step by step, creeping nearer. Together, they passed a light. The second man addressed the first.

"Professor Mendelssohn, unless I'm mistaken," he said. The old scientist acknowledged his identity. But he continued his fast walking. The stranger kept in step beside him and said, "I'm—Jones—of the University of Wales. We met once, but possibly you don't recall me. I've never forgotten your treatise on radiation, sir."

"Ah, you remember that?" exclaimed Mendelssohn, pleased.

"I take it you are on your way to Doctor Benet's demonstration," the other continued. Mendelssohn flashed him a look. Why was this man so eager? Should he tell him? Oh, well, it must be all right.

He nodded. "It should be a most interesting evening."

"It should indeed!" the eyes of the man named Jones glared. Then: "No one's to be admitted without a card, I believe."

"Yes. Under the circumstances, you know." Professor Mendelssohn patted the breast pocket of his coat to make sure his ticket was safe.

"Br-r-r! A nasty night!" Jones shivered as he took a flask from his pocket. "I feel a chill coming on. Napoleon brandy, sir? A sip or two of it might help us on our way. I suggest we step over there," he indicated the areaway of a deserted house, "out of the rain."

The flask looked good to the professor. Jones politely offered him the first drink. The old man raised the flask to his lips. Ah, that tasted good. But that fire in his throat—— He was choking—blind! He tried to call for help. Then he tottered and fell. He was dead before he struck the ground.

Rukh thrust his hand into the dead man's breast pocket. He pulled out his wallet, and removed Mendelssohn's card of admission. But would he be able to pass the guard at the gate? Did they know what Mendelssohn looked like? It would have to be faced. At any rate, impersonating Mendelssohn would be more difficult than posing as a nebulous "Mister Jones."

Keeping his head well down into his muffler, he approached the Benet home. His heart beat wildly as he saw the uniformed policemen before him. They were checking the names of the guests from lists. The guests were arriving on foot and by car. Numbers were going in. That might help. He must risk it. Now or never——

HE handed his card to a gendarme. The man looked at it a long time. Then he called out:

"Professor Mendelssohn."

"*Oui,*" replied the other watcher, checking the name on his list.

Rukh was past the guard. He went slowly up the stairs to the veranda. The Surete Chief went down past him. Rukh heard the first gendarme say:

"All are here, except one——"

"To be admitted at once," answered the chief, for the name the man showed him was Janos Rukh. "You will stand at the main house switch," the chief went on. "It is to be thrown at exactly twelve o'clock."

Rukh smiled as he heard them. They were a little late—as he had been when he had found Benet curing the blind girl. Well, he would not be late this time!

He did not go inside. No traps for him! He stole softly along the veranda. Step by step! Stealthily he reached a spot where he could look into the room where the demonstration was to be held. It was a round chamber such as is commonly used for scientific society meetings. The guests were standing in groups, chatting. He saw the Surete Chief enter and go to Benet and Drake where they stood at the front of the room. Through the doors, he heard the official say:

"No stranger has tried to enter."

"Perhaps he won't come," said Drake hopefully, but Doctor Benet shook his head.

"He will be here," he said definitely. "Probably is here now."

As he spoke the doctor looked up at the clock on the wall. The other two men followed his gaze. The hands pointed out twelve minutes before midnight. The three men compared watches. The zero hour was approaching. Doctor Benet coolly said to Drake:

"Shall we take our posts?"

"Mine is here," Drake grinned.

He held out his hand and Benet grasped it hard. Both men realized that they were shaking hands perhaps for the last time. Then Benet ascended three steps of the staircase that led from the room to the chambers above, he turned and addressed the crowd:

"If you will all be patient for just a few minutes, I will make the final adjustments in my laboratory and be ready."

FROM the shadows outside, Rukh heard and saw all. He watched Benet go through an arch that led to his laboratory. For Rukh, too, the zero hour was approaching. He gazed at his hand. It had not yet begun to glow. In a few minutes the first glow would come, making him a torch of death. And then——

He saw Drake go up the stairs. Rukh knew instinctively he was going to Diane to see if she was being safely guarded. Diane! Diane! A convulsion shook Rukh's body as he thought of her, so beautiful! That beauty was now another's, but it was his by right! In a few minutes he would touch that beauty again and that touch would kill! He crept toward the door——

Drake had not gone to his wife's room. He had met Noyer, Doctor Benet's house servant who assured him that Diane was safe in the keeping of Mme. Noyer. Diane paced her lamplit chamber agonized with anxiety, more lovely than Rukh had visioned her. Why was she being kept there? Why could she not go near the window? She hurled the questions at her companion impatiently.

"Have patience, madame," the Frenchwoman replied. "There must be danger."

"Danger for my husband, yes!" Diane flamed. "And I am not allowed to share it!"

In the laboratory, Benet finished his last arrangements. He rose and looked at his watch. The time had come to bolt the doors of the house and then plunge the rooms in darkness to betray those luminous hands that carried death. Doctor Benet was perfectly cool. He felt no more excitement than when, on that terrible night in the African hills, Rukh had come to him, the world's greatest astro-chemist, for aid, and he had coolly prepared the antidote for the radium poisoning. Now he was paying for saving that madman's life!

Benet knew that no door in the house was unguarded but the door to his laboratory in the rear of the building. Benet drew a heavy automatic from his pocket. He unfastened the safety catch. Rukh would have to touch him to kill, while with this gun—— He replaced the weapon and walked briskly to the door. He reached for the bolt. One step more——

But he never reached that bolt. The door opened silently, quickly. A man slid in. As he did so, he felt for the electric light switch alongside of the door jamb. There was a sharp click. Darkness! The two men stood six inches apart.

There before Benet, so close that he could feel the fiery wave of heat pulsating from it, glowed the flaming face of Janos Rukh!

THE doctor stepped back as the fiery face advanced. He tried in vain to avoid that deadly heat. He did not reach for his gun—Rukh was too close for that. But there might be some other way out of danger——

"We expected you." Benet heard himself say the words as if another were uttering them.

"I knew that." Rukh's eyes were more fiery than his face. He snarled his words. Then he laughed a hysterical, heartbroken, gloating laugh. "Five thieves! Two are gone, three are left."

"You intend to kill us all?" Benet was playing for time.

"Yes!" As if he guessed the thought in the astro-chemist's mind, Rukh crept closer to him.

"I knew I should have let things alone when you were first poisoned," cried Benet, bitterly. He glared into mad eyes. "I warned you about your brain."

"It began to affect my brain almost immediately. I could feel it coming." Rukh's grin was a dreadful thing to see as it wrinkled his incandescent cheeks. "I could feel it crawling into the cells."

"Aren't there ever moments when you think as you used to think? When you are human?"

Rukh stared at Benet with tortured eyes. For a moment the doctor thought his chance shot had gone home. If he could only delay Rukh for five minutes —— Drake and the chief must be looking for him now. But there was no mercy in Rukh's face! He gave a little, hard laugh.

"Not often, now," he said ominously. "Not often!"

"And because of that," Benet made another attempt to reach Rukh's pity, "we must die?"

"No! Because you are thieves," came the wild reply. "Thieves! Thieves! All thieves! Five thieves!" The writhing lips were like a wreath of flame as he snarled out the words. Then he held out his hand, throbbing with fire. "It will be simplest just to shake hands," he said, grinning horribly as he saw Benet's frightened look. "All will be over in a second——"

Doctor Benet realized that the moment had come when he must take some action. Rukh was so close to him now that he could feel the heat of that radium-poisoned body seeping through his clothes. No one knew better than Benet the killing power of that phosphorescent shimmer writhing in Rukh's face. Keeping his eyes on Rukh's, his hand flashed for his gun.

His fingers reached it, but, before he could draw, he felt Rukh's hand, those fingers of fire, at his throat, paralyzing him! His head was suddenly bursting! He was dying—dying—dead! He slid to the floor.

Three dead! Janos Rukh did not say the words as he looked down at the still form on the floor, but that was his thought. Two more to die, if he had time! Already, nursed to terrible power by hours without the antidote, Radium X was beginning to dizzy him. Could he hold out?

He opened the arch door cautiously. Catlike he stepped out into the lighted hall. Not a sound, except the murmur of the guests in the lecture room eagerly awaiting the lecturer who would never come. Good. No one had heard him kill Benet. Now for Drake. And then—Diane!

IN her room, Diane paced distractedly up and down. Madame Noyer quietly knitting excited her even more. Try as she might, she could not shake off the feeling of evil creeping near. She knew Janos Rukh as few did beside his mother. She had not been deceived by the disguises of the Surete agents downstairs, pretending to be scientists.

She knew there was some awful peril. She felt Janos was near—in that house—that Drake was in danger because of her, because he loved her.

"I know something awful has happened," she cried, whirling on the old servant woman.

"Try to compose yourself, madame," begged the other, but Diane flared out at her:

"I can't stand this! Go and find my husband! Tell him I've got to see him, if it's only for a moment." She flung herself down on a chaise longue.

Mme. Noyer debated what to do.

"I was ordered to remain here," she said reluctantly. "But as you say, madame," she added hastily as Diane turned furious eyes on her.

The old lady went out into the silent hall. She did not know where Drake was. But she knew that in a few minutes the house would be in darkness and death might strike them all. She wished her husband were with her. She was frightened, but she hurried along, listened, then went on.

Old Noyer was at the front door where Benet had posted him. His instructions were to shoot the great bolt when the hands of the clock were at two minutes to twelve. The minute hand was crossing the mark. The gendarme beside Noyer nodded. The servant touched the bolt.

As he did, the panels of the door shook under a series of heavy knocks. The gendarme opened, his gun ready. There on the threshold stood one of his fellow officers. Beside him stood a woman dressed in black. A long black cape hung from her shoulders, a thick veil was wrapped around her head. She leaned on a stout cane.

The woman said nothing to Noyer. She looked sharply around the hall with glowing eyes. Then there came a sound of rushing feet from the stairway. Ronald Drake sprang down the steps. His eyes were fixed on the woman.

"Mother Rukh!" he cried. "It was good of you to come." He took her hands.

Noyer looked at this famous woman with interest as he shot the bolt. *Two minutes of twelve!*

"It is my duty to be here," replied Mother Rukh. Then, "Where is Diane?"

"In her room," answered Drake. The clock's hands crawled near twelve. A minute more, then——

Together Drake and Mme. Rukh went toward the main room where the visitors still awaited Doctor Benet.

THEY could not hear the steps of madness and murder. Through the hall like a tiger crept Rukh to his prey. The hall was lighted. His fiery glow did not show. As he reached the stairs, he listened.

No one was moving above. Somewhere at the head of those steps was Diane's room. Drake would be there on guard—Drake, who had stolen his wife. Drake would die first! Then, Diane's white throat in his fingers——

Rukh stole up the stairway. He tested each tread lightly before putting his weight on it. His furtive manner was not that of a sane man, for all his caution. He came near the top. Then midnight struck.

Instantly the house went dark as the gendarme threw the main switch of the building. The police converged upon the lecture room to arrest the man with the luminous hands and face, while far above them their quarry ascended the stairs gleaming like a fiery goblin from Hell!

He reached the landing in front of Diane's room. He looked for Drake. He reached the door——

Diane had gasped as the lights went out. She was all alone. Mme. Noyer had not returned. For a minute that seemed like an eternity, the girl had sat still in her chair. Then, unable to bear the silence and darkness any longer, she had sprung up.

She lit a candle on her writing desk. Its light was almost worse than the darkness. Its wavering flame made the shadows dance, ghostlike on the walls.

She tried to keep her eyes from them. She could not shake off the feeling that death was creeping in upon them. Why did not Mme. Noyer come back? Surely that was a footstep outside the door! She must get her husband. She must! She flung open the door.

She saw a man, a shadowy figure in the dark. She cried out! He turned. The dark blazed with his face. Janos Rukh had found her alone. She had called death to herself!

"Diane!" He breathed her name softly, although his face was a mask of murder.

"Janos—Janos," her lips formed the words, but no sound came from her dry throat.

They were only a few feet apart. Diane stared, wide-eyed with horror at the awful being that had once been her husband. Stealthily, Rukh moved a step closer to her. Fear held her still. He made another step.

Suddenly she screamed. She backed away from him into the bedroom. She tried to slam the door against him. But he was too quick. He grasped the door as it was swinging shut. Into the dim-lit room with its ghostly shadows he followed her. On the woodwork of the door where he had grasped it, remained the glowing print of his fingers! Again came her awful, marrow-chilling scream.

NO one in the house heard it except the man who had come to murder her. The hunt for him was now in full cry downstairs in the lecture room. The police had closed in as the lights snapped out. They peered through the dark room for a shining hand or face. They saw none. They lighted a few candles. They investigated all the protesting guests. No sign of Rukh, and—more alarming—no sign of Doctor Benet!

Drake took a candle. He called on the Surete Chief and his men to follow him. They hurried to the door of the laboratory. Bursting into the darkened room, they found Benet's body where he had dropped, his gun by his side, an eerie luminous glow around his throat. The sight of it shocked Drake cold. He knew that meant only one thing! He rushed for the stairs—for Diane's room!

In that room, Rukh stood with his back to the door. He muttered to himself madly. Diane crouched against the chaise longue, staring at the apparition glimmering in the darkness.

"Janos," she murmured. He spat the name back at her with bitter mockery.

Diane gave a shuddering cry and tottered against the chaise longue, half fainting. Her instinct was to escape, but she could not move. Her feet seemed rooted to the floor. Rukh came toward her with his peculiar furtive, insane gait. He crooked his flickering fingers over her an inch from her face. It gave him light enough to see the face he loved so much, but so madly desired to destroy.

"I want to get my eyes full of your loveliness first," he said, "full of your loveliness!"

As his flaming fingers played over her face and hair Diane involuntarily put up her own hands. Rukh's hands caressed them without touching them. In the peaceful past when he had heated his head with hours of work, her hands on his brow would refresh him.

"Cool hands," he muttered, "put them close to my forehead. But don't touch me——"

Moving as in a trance, Diane obeyed. She passed her hands near his head as he groaned:

"All the fires that burn inside my head are going—going——"

Diane could not keep her feet any longer under the strain. With a hoarse sob she sank down on the chaise. Rukh knelt before her. He whispered, each word wrenched out in agony!

"There's only a little time left for me. Only a little time. Don't move, Diane. Don't move. I want to hold you in my arms just once. I want to destroy you—but I can't! I can't!"

THE lips of the madman came closer to those of the shuddering girl. She writhed away from him on the silken chair. This was the supreme torture of Rukh's life. Every nerve in his body longed for the pressure of his lips on hers, but he could not enjoy that caress from a living woman! His touch would kill instantly! The strain was too much even for a will of steel such as his. He literally tore himself away from her as his mind seemed to clear a bit.

He rushed for the door to the hall to find Drake. His fiery glow was increasing now. He gleamed like a white-hot bar of metal. As he burst from the room, there was an ear-splitting scream.

It was Mme. Noyer. As she cried out, she fell fainting to the floor, her candle guttering out. And there in the eerie light of his own features, Rukh saw his mother standing before him.

"Mother!" he cried in a voice of agony. "Mother!"

Rukh had let his poison recklessly burn almost too long. He now realized that he had reached the deadline where it could kill himself as well as others! Still his tortured mind clung insanely to one thought.

"I must have time. I must go on to reach one more—Drake!" he cried.

As he spoke, Drake appeared at the foot of the stairs with the police. The chief raised his revolver and aimed at Rukh. Drake checked him and forced down his hand.

Spellbound, they watched the mad scientist take the little leather case, holding his hypodermic full of the antidote, from his pocket. He had waited until his death was only minutes away. He started to open the case—to bring himself back to normal.

With anguished eyes his mother watched this horrible wreck of the son she had borne into the world. Then, with a movement quick as the striking paw of a lioness, she raised her cane and cut down with it. The stick struck the leather case. The hypodermic shattered on the floor.

"My son," she said, and her words meant death, "you have broken the first law of science."

Almost on fire, Rukh faced his fate like a man. He groped for the last vestige of his sanity and found it for a moment as he replied:

"You are right, mother. It is better this way!" His gaze was tender. "Good-by!"

With never another look he turned and started up the stairs at the back of the hall, leading up to a window. His clothes smoked. Fire broke from his hands and head making him a flaming cross as, with arms outspread, he dove through the window! Down he flamed to the ground to die in fire like the meteor he had seen crash blazing into Africa long before!

DRAKE, the Surete Chief, and the other scientists and police rushed up the stairs to where Mother Rukh stood, staring at the shattered window above with stony eyes. The anguish in her heart was almost more than she could suffer and still live, but she gave no sign. Drake passed and went into Diane's bedroom. The next instant they were in each other's arms.

President La Coste of the French Congress of Scientists, came to the side of Mother Rukh.

"Madame Rukh," he bowed reverently, "may I pay homage to you?"

Mother Rukh handed to this most distinguished of Doctor Benet's guests the scroll Janos had given her before departing for Paris. It contained his secret of Radium X.

"Janos Rukh is dead," she said, "but I would have him go on eternally, working for humanity."

THE LONE WOLF RETURNS . . . .

The world's slickest thief was the only man who could protect the Collier emerald—and they wanted to jail him for it!

THE man in the high hat lifted the Bancroft pearls from the safe with misgiving. It had all been too easy. The clear night—the open window—the absence of the army of detectives who were known to be guarding the priceless necklace day and night. He should have suspected a trap. But then it had always been easy for him. The baffled officials of every police department on two continents admitted that.

Contemptuously he took out his silk handkerchief and smudged the fingerprints on the wall-safe. He drew on his gloves again, wondering when men would stop putting their faith in such playthings as safes. Then, stepping to the French windows, he admired the perfectly matched pearls in the light of the full moon. But his eyes which long years of being hunted had trained to see everything caught a movement in the bushes! There was no wind. The movement could mean only one thing—police! He slipped back into the shadows, annoyed. The famous Lone Wolf was cornered at last!

Well, he resolved with a shrug, it was to be a battle of wits again. Or rather, he smiled confidently, a slaughter of wits. He took out his cigarette case. A twist of his finger nail on a secret spot opened a false bottom. He deftly slipped the necklace into it and snapped it shut. Then he selected a cigarette and considered his plight.

In the garden below, two detectives looked at each other.

"I think we've given him enough time to hang himself," said one. "Let's go!" He flashed a pocket light and detectives from all sides converged on the house.

UPSTAIRS, in the meantime, the cornered Lone Wolf had walked up to a pedestal standing behind drawn curtains in an adjoining window. He recognized the bust of Julius Cæsar and smiled to it

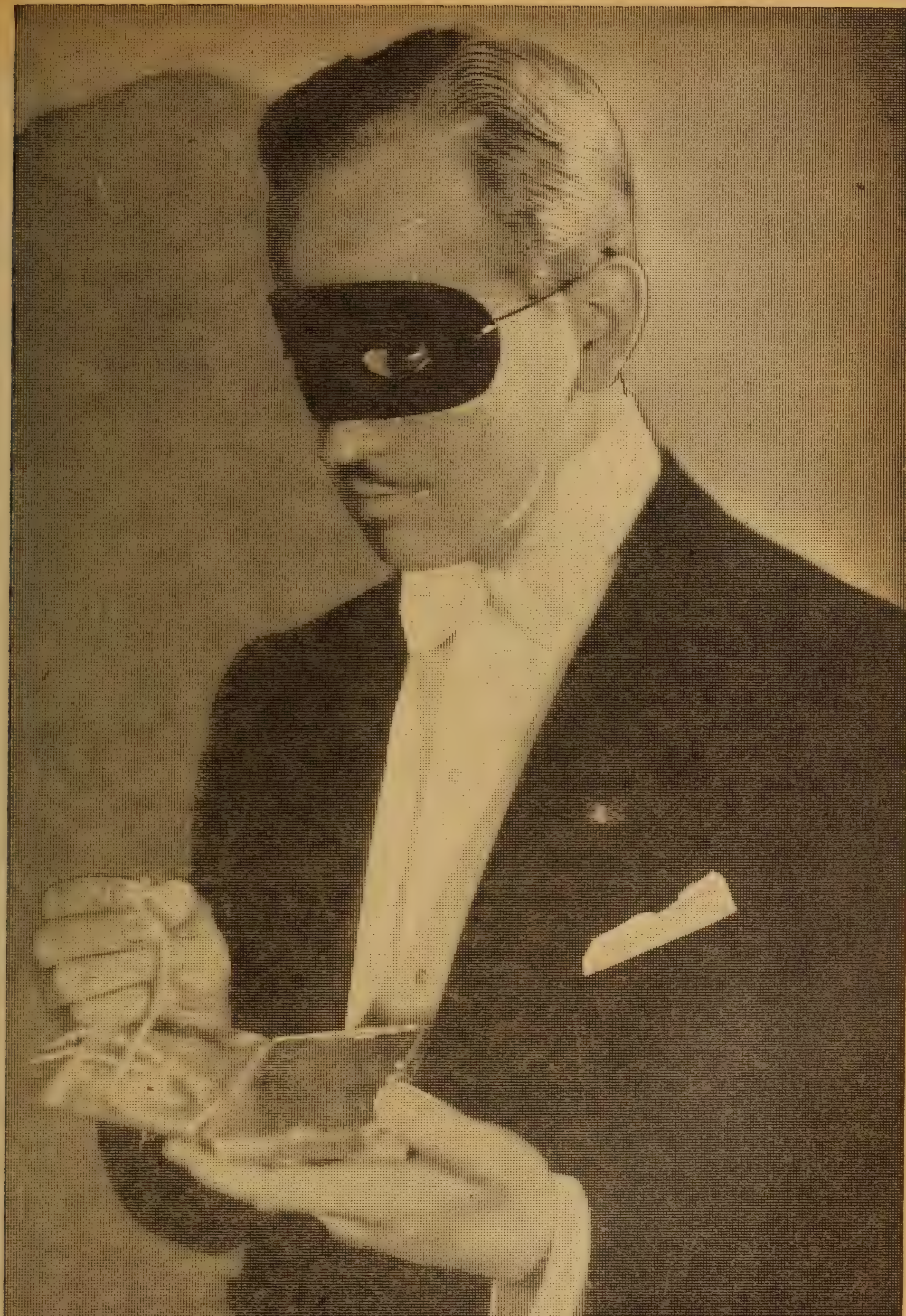
A fictionized version of the Columbia Picture of the same title.

THE CAST

MELVYN DOUGLAS	Michael Lanyard
GAIL PATRICK	Marcia Stewart
Raymond Walburn	Jenkins
Henry Mollison	Mallison
Arthur Hohl	Morphew
Tala Birell	Liane
Thurston Hall	Detective Crane

Screenplay adapted by Joseph Krumgold, Bruce Manning, and Lionel Houser from the novel of the same title by Louis Joseph Vance.

Directed by Roy William Neill



The Lone Wolf deftly slipped the necklace into it and snapped it shut.

gratefully as to a friend in need. Carefully he placed his high hat at a jaunty angle on its head. With a pang of regret he removed his Chesterfield coat which had been made for him in London only a month before, and draped it around the bust's shoulders. He stepped back and examined his work. Then, satisfied that no one would be able to tell Michael Lanyard and Julius Cæsar apart, he flung open the curtains for all comers to see.

Without hat or coat now, but impeccable in his evening clothes, the Lone Wolf walked jauntily down the hall as if he owned the house. Completely confident that the bust with the high hat would throw the police off the trail long enough to give him an opportunity to escape, he did not take even the obvious precaution of walking quietly. The floor squeaked under his stride.

As he rounded a corner a bedroom door opened, straight in his path. He came face to face with an old man in pajamas. Obviously the man was a servant because Lanyard could see that he was in the servant's quarters.

"Mr. Bancroft——" the man began, squinting through his horn-rimmed glasses.

Lanyard stepped quickly up to him. "I'm not Mr. Bancroft," he said in a warning whisper. "You're being robbed!"

"No!" cried the terrified servant in a whispered shriek.

The Lone Wolf clapped his hand over the servant's mouth to muffle his outcry.

"Stop it!" he commanded. "I say there's a crook, a desperate criminal in the house."

The servant struggled to make himself heard through the hand that was gripping his mouth.

"But who are you?" he asked in muffled tones.

The Lone Wolf, still holding the servant tightly, pulled a watch from his pocket. On its back there was a glinting decoration of a coat of arms. He flashed it on the near-sighted servant.

"Headquarters!" whispered the Lone Wolf as he had heard so many detectives whisper before. "We've got the place surrounded!"

THE butler was fearful and impressed. Lanyard released him and they walked to a window. Lanyard saw that what he had said was not all a lie—the house *was* surrounded! He looked at the servant, wondering if he might not prove useful after all.

Lanyard pointed to the detectives posted at the main entrance. "He won't dare go out that way," he said; hoping that this would encourage the trembling old man to suggest some other exit. But he was obviously too scared to talk. Lanyard turned and grabbed him. He was resolved to shock him out of his coma.

"He'll be going down the side way!" Lanyard cried excitedly. "Into the shrubbery off the first floor!"

The servant caught his excitement. "There is no side way," he said, shaking. "He'd have to use the back stairs—out through the basement."

Lanyard patted him on the back proudly. "That's all I wanted to know," he smiled. "Let's go."

THE servant quickly led the man "from headquarters" to the back stairs. And none too soon, for the detectives had spied the high-hatted figure of Cæsar through the window!

"He's coming out of the window!" he cried.

"You're covered!" yelled another, raising his gun. "Get those hands up!"

But the cornered "criminal" did not put his hands up. The detective's shot shattered the peaceful night. Glass tinkled to the ground. The high hat flew through the air, and the shadowy figure reeled and crashed to the floor.

"Come on!" cried the cop, excited at

"That's the end of the Lone Wolf," he said. "They got him!"

being the one finally to "get" the greatest jewel thief in the world. "I've got him!"

They dashed pell-mell for the house, the two detectives racing noisily up the stairs. One switched on the lights while the other bent over the figure huddled in the crumpled coat at the window.

"Did I get him?" asked the first detective.

The man at the window lifted the coat back from the fallen pedestal.

"Bah!" he exclaimed. "You shot too late to get this guy—two thousand years too late!"

By this time Lanyard and the servant had reached the basement door.

"This is where he'll come through," said the servant, anxious to help.

Lanyard measured the servant with his eyes. "I'll say he will," he agreed. Then whipping a hand to the old man's throat, "Believe me, I'm sorry to have to do this," he said as kindly as possible under the circumstances.

He rendered him unconscious as expertly and painlessly as possible and put the poor man's pajamas on over his formal clothes. He added the spectacles as an extra precaution and after rumpling his hair he assumed the air of a peaceful citizen driven out of his bed.

He rushed out into the moonlit garden. A policeman immediately stepped up to him.

"He'll be coming out this way!" Lanyard blurted out excitedly, pointing back in the passageway.

"Yeah, but on a stretcher," said the cop. "Go back to bed, mister. They popped him upstairs."

"Not me!" Lanyard protested. "I'm

not going back while the Lone Wolf is in there—dead or alive."

"Suit yourself," said the cop, walking off.

Lanyard waited until he had disappeared in the night. Then he hurried off along the hedged path, making for the next cop who stood guard at the small iron gate which led through a high stone fence to the estate next door.

He nodded to the blue-coated figure. "That's the end of the Lone Wolf," he said. "They got him."

"Yeah, I heard," said the guard.

"In cold blood," continued Lanyard, knowing that this guard, stationed so far away from the house, would be anxious to hear details. "It was splattered all over the living-room carpet!"

The guard looked pleased. "No matter how smart they are, they all wind up on a slab—remember that," he said knowingly.

"You can't win," agreed Lanyard wisely. Then: "But now you'll have to go and tell Mr. Bancroft about it. He's at the party next door."

The policeman's dignity was hurt. "I gotta go?" he echoed. "I can't leave. I'm stationed here."

"But *somebody's* got to tell him," Lanyard insisted.

"All right then, *you* go," the guard suggested.

Lanyard started forward slowly, trying not to appear too eager. The policeman opened the gate for him. "The nerve of him," he muttered, staring after the fast fading Lone Wolf. "*I* gotta go!"

MICHAEL LANYARD walked behind a tree and, pulling off his pajamas, stepped forth immaculate again in his tail coat. Confidently he set out for the main entrance of the house where many couples, still in their masquerade costumes, were getting a breath of fresh air from the party.

The Lone Wolf planned to lose himself among them, then slip away into the night. But rounding the corner of the house he stopped short. Two detectives were coming down the main road, stopping to examine every guest as they passed.

Lanyard realized that he had fooled enough cops for one evening. Now it was wiser to retreat. There was a drunk lying on the lawn. Quickly, he appropriated his mask, hid his own features with it, and turned into the house.

The ball-room was overflowing with gay color but, as if by lightning, Lanyard's practiced eye was immediately drawn to a crystal bit of green hanging from a girl's neck. Even at fifty paces he knew that it was the most expensive emerald he had ever seen.

"The Collier emerald," he thought, happily surprised. "What a small world! The last time we met was in Rome, three years ago. I can't leave you behind again."

He leaned against a wall to consider how best he might lift the pendant when he saw a man break through the circle of admirers that surrounded the girl and lead her to the dance floor, against the protests of the other men.

Pretty good, thought Lanyard. But as they danced past him, he thought it queer that the man held his hand so high on the girl's back—so near the neck. It looked almost as if——

Lanyard gasped. He saw the man's hand touch lightly the catch of her pendant. Entranced, he watched the pendant slip from her throat. He found himself nodding approvingly. The man was a quick worker!

Abruptly, the girl stopped dancing and her hands flew to her neck.

"My pendant!" she cried. "I've lost it!"

Her partner stooped to pick it up. Lanyard saw his cupped hand resting on the floor. He smiled. It was all such a routine affair. The cupped hand held a paste imitation of course, which the thief would change for the real emerald.

But the real emerald was nowhere to be seen. The man looked up perplexed. The girl was blushing.

"It didn't fall—all the way," the girl stammered, pointing to the low neck of her costume. She laughed, embarrassed. "I'm afraid I'll have to be excused. The catch must have broken. I'll put the pendant away while I'm upstairs."

She went hurriedly up the stairs. Lanyard cast a grateful glance at the bungler and casually strolled after the girl.

SHE entered a room on the first landing. Lanyard stepped into the adjoining room, strode out on the terrace and stealthily peered through the French windows into the girl's room. She had just

It was really an injustice to take the jewel. That man downstairs must have worked so hard!

finished putting the pendant in the wall-safe. Giving the knob a final twirl for good measure, she fixed her hair in her reflection on the safe door and went out humming a tune.

He entered humming the same tune. It was an injustice to take the jewel, he reflected as he started on the combination. That man downstairs must have worked so hard! It was no mean job to get an invitation to a Stewart party. And that girl must be Marcia Stewart, the most popular debutante of the season. What a fortune it must have cost him to get this "in." And yet here was he, just walking out of the Bancroft job into this one! It certainly was unfair, he concluded as he opened the safe.

When Lanyard reached the stairs on his way down, he found his lovely victim arguing with an insistent young man.

"But why can't we go out and get married now?" the man was saying a bit the louder because of too much drink.

"Because—because——" the girl faltered, not quite able to cope with the situation. Then, seeing Lanyard, she smiled to him. Lanyard smiled back. "Because I promised the next dance to this gentleman," she finished bravely.

"Hello," said Lanyard, bewildered but chivalrously ready to help, "sorry I kept you waiting."

"Better late than never," said Marcia, taking his arm and leading him to the floor. "Who are you?" she asked as they swung into the dance.

"Somebody trying to get away from someone, just as you were," he answered truthfully enough.

"A crowded dance floor is just the place for that," she laughed.

"But the terrace is even better," he suggested. He had just noticed two official-looking men entering the ball-room. Leading her out through the French doors, he felt it was high time he made his getaway.

"Will you forgive me for kissing you?" Lanyard asked, pausing for a last farewell.

"But you haven't——" Marcia said, puzzled. Her eyes opened wide in alarm. "I mean—you're not going to——"

"But I am," Lanyard embraced her. But he had dallied too long. Heavy steps broke in on them.

"EXCUSE me," said a new voice.

They parted. It was the butler with the two detectives.

"Yes, Joseph?" said Marcia.

"These gentlemen want to see you. They say they're from police headquarters."

The two detectives were apologetic. "Sorry to break in this way, lady," said one, "but the house next door's been robbed. We're looking for the thief."

Marcia glanced at Lanyard, a vague suspicion in her eyes.

"He's a dangerous criminal," the detective went on, "and we know he hasn't gotten out of this neighborhood."

"What do you want me to do?" Marcia asked.

"You know everyone that should be here, Miss Stewart," the detective said. "Will you ask everybody to unmask so you can see if there's a stranger in the crowd?"

Marcia looked at Lanyard again. He tried to look bored. Inwardly, however, he was wondering if a leap over the terrace railing would gain him safety. Then Marcia's gaze fell.

"Of course," she agreed. She signaled to the orchestra to stop playing.

"Dear friends," she told her startled guests, "by special request of the police department you'll all have to unmask so I can take a look at you."

Lanyard took his mask off slowly. Marcia studied his face questioningly.

"Do you notice anybody strange here, Miss Stewart?" asked the detective.

Marcia hesitated. Then resolutely she turned and swept the room with her eyes.

Quickly, he did a remarkable thing. He took the Collier emerald and replaced it in its case!

She returned her searching glance to Michael, who assumed an air of bland indifference, hoping to make her feel he was above suspicion.

"I can vouch for everyone in this room," she said finally. "But you may search the rest of the house if you wish."

"Oh, no," the detective was embarrassed. "That satisfies us, Miss Stewart. We'll move on. We're sorry we bothered you."

As they left, the man who had tried to steal Miss Stewart's pendant earlier in the evening came up accompanied by a beautiful girl. Lanyard started at the sight of her. She winked knowingly in return.

THE man spoke with forced casualness. "I think this gentleman is one of your friends that I have not met."

"Why, this is——" Marcia began and then realized that she did not know Michael's name. But she could not stop there. "This is Colonel Thompson, an old friend from Kentucky," she recovered, "Mr. Mallison—Colonel Thompson. And——" she turned to Mallison's companion, "Mrs. Liane Mallison."

Mallison acknowledged the introduction icily, Liane a little more warmly. The man turned to Marcia. "Dance?" he asked.

She slipped into his arms and they moved away. Liane turned to Lanyard.

"Colonel——?" She smiled too sweetly. The Lone Wolf knew instinctively that, while he might fool the police and brazen matters out with Marcia Stewart, there would be no deceiving this girl!

He took her hand heartily. "Well, imagine meeting you here!" he said, with genuine warmth.

Liane was pleased. "You do remember me?"

Lanyard tried to appear hurt. "Of course. Nora. You had that studio on the Boulevard St. Michel."

She shook her head. "No, it's Liane, and it was an apartment on East Twelfth Street."

Lanyard's face lit up. "Ah, yes, I remember now. Except, when we first met, did I catch you going through my desk—or was I going through yours?"

"I was going through yours," Liane confessed.

"Of course. But it all ended up so pleasantly," he reminisced. "I see you've gotten into society."

Liane nodded in acknowledgement.

"And that sulky young man," Lanyard continued. "Your working partner, I suppose?"

Liane nodded. "He doesn't always look sulky, though. Just tonight. He's jealous, I think."

Lanyard raised his eyebrows. "Of Miss Stewart."

"Oh, no!" Liane laughed. "Of you. It's professional jealousy. I told him who you are. But don't mind it. I want you to join us."

THE Lone Wolf stiffened apprehensively. "Join you? Oh, no. I never make——"

"You don't understand," Liane hurried to explain. "I just want you to join us at a small party tomorrow night at the Quarter Moon Club."

"Not at Morphew's place!" Lanyard said emphatically. "I'm not interested."

"You should be," Liane insisted. "The party's for Marcia. And there are jewels in her family's collection even more valuable than the Collier emerald."

Lanyard fingered the pendant in one pocket, the cigarette case concealing the pearls in another, and wondered how much she suspected.

"Obviously," Liane went on, "you're interested in one or the other."

The Lone Wolf smiled. "Is it that obvious?" he asked.

"I know you," the lady smiled. "Will it be tomorrow night then, Colonel?"

"Tomorrow night," agreed Lanyard. "I am interested in one—or the other."

He made his excuses and, leaving Liane, went up the stairs again. Quickly he opened Marcia's safe and did a remarkable thing. He took the Collier emerald from his pocket and replaced it in its case!

Naturally, he told himself, he could not steal a necklace from a girl who had refused to turn him over to the police. He did not let himself wonder if there was any other reason. But as he passed the dressing table he saw a photograph of Marcia in a miniature frame. He examined it critically for a moment, then slipped it out of the frame. It was a fair exchange he thought as he went out onto the terrace and disappeared into the night.

LANYARD'S doorbell rang while he was still in his bath the next morning. His face was full of soap, and he was rubbing vigorously behind his left ear when his man Jenkins came in excitedly and whispered in his ear. Lanyard ducked his head and came up with a clean face.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Crane's here," Jenkins repeated.

"Dear old Crane!" Lanyard cried, pleased. "I've missed him. There's never been a detective I've liked more."

He peered through the open bathroom door. Crane was rummaging in a chest of drawers. Lanyard watched, amused as the detective went through drawer after drawer from the bottom up.

As he reached the top Crane noticed Marcia's photograph resting against the cigarette case. He whistled in surprise. Lanyard tensed, but Crane passed by the cigarette case which still contained the stolen Bancroft pearls and picked up the picture. He gave himself a moment to admire the beautiful face before returning to his work. Then, as he picked up the case, Lanyard leaned forward in the tub.

"Hi, Crane!" he called out. "Don't be such a stranger. Come in and offer me a smoke."

Crane came into the bathroom and handed him the cigarette case but retained the photograph. Lanyard took out a cigarette.

"Aiming high," Crane remarked, pointing to the picture.

"She is a little different from any other girl I've ever met," Lanyard conceded, trying to hold Crane's attention on the photograph while he brought the cigarette case around to where it would be screened by his body.

Crane nodded in agreement. "A little wealthier, you mean."

With the case safely out of Crane's sight, Lanyard snapped open the false bottom and let the pearls sink into the tub. "Now, Crane," he asked, feigning offence, "what can you mean by that remark?"

"Just this, Michael," Crane said. "They say the Lone Wolf is going the rounds again. He got the Bancroft pearls last night and one big jewel haul a week every week since he came back from Europe a month ago! Always in that nice polite way of his too—just as if he merely whistled and the gems came trooping out to him through thin air!"

"Interesting," remarked Lanyard.

"I'm a double crosser?" Morphew raged. "Why, you two-timing crook!"

"I was wondering what you thought," said Crane.

Lanyard put the cigarette case down carelessly and rose from the tub. "Me?" he asked surprised.

"In all the years I chased the Lone Wolf, I never got close enough to get a look at him," Crane confessed. "But he works a lot like you used to, Michael. I was thinking maybe you knew something."

Lanyard considered the question in silence as he reached for his robe. He was making a great decision.

"I do know something," he said finally. "I've got a hunch this Lone Wolf you're talking about is through prowling—through preying!"

Crane held Lanyard's eyes with a searching look.

"It's always been my ambition to bring the Lone Wolf in," he said, "but if you say he's really quit, I'll forget it."

Lanyard walked him to the door. "I'm sure he'll appreciate it," he hinted.

"But if you're wrong"—Crane stopped in the open door—"I won't stop till I swap his name for a number!"

LANYARD was not wrong, however. The late evening papers were full of the miracle. The *Star* carried the headline across eight columns:

MANY FAMOUS STOLEN
JEWELS RETURNED

Triple Housebreak Mystifies Police

Bancroft Pearls Among Fortunes
Returned

The return of a major criminal to the straight and narrow path was indicated today when three houses burglarized in the last month were again invaded, this time to return the stolen loot. The Bancroft pearls stolen only last night——

The Chief of Police put down his paper. "This is incredible!" he said.

Crane looked up annoyed. "What's troubling you? He's taken himself off your hands, hasn't he?"

"But the crook is giving things away!" the Chief complained. "It isn't legitimate, I tell you. He's just building up for something bigger."

"I think you're wrong," said Crane.

"Well you just stick to the case anyway," the Chief ordered. "I tell you something's going to happen."

Crane shrugged. He knew it was a waste of time, but orders were orders.

MICHAEL LANYARD drove up to the Quarter Moon Club that night with his man Jenkins. He parked across the street and studied the building. The window of the big private room—the one where a girl of Marcia Stewart's wealth would naturally be entertained—was brightly lighted.

"Watch that window," Lanyard told Jenkins. "Keep your eyes on it and the moment the curtain comes down, do your stuff!" He entered the club.

The Mallisons had Marcia at a table in the corner. Marcia's face lit up the moment she saw him at the door.

"Oh, I'm so glad it's you," she said when he reached the table. "Liane promised me a surprise but she wouldn't tell me what it was."

"I'm glad you like it," Liane beamed.

"But where's Morphew?" asked Lanyard, looking about worried. He always felt more comfortable when his enemies were in sight.

"He's fixing the room upstairs for us," Mallison said.

Upstairs Morphew was giving a couple of yeggs their final instructions.

"Lay off the booze," he told them, "and plant one of the boys at each door. There's a guy with Mallison downstairs that might stay awhile."

In the meantime Lanyard had asked Marica for a dance. He felt he should warn her against the Mallisons. Tonight she was still safe. This party, he knew, had been staged solely to bring him to terms—or put him out of the competition. But tomorrow they would be after her again. And they were ready to strike.

"Tell me," he began when he had her alone on the floor, "how well do you know the Mallisons?"

"Oh, quite well. I met them in Europe a month ago. Why?"

"These sudden acquaintances—do you think they are wise? After all, you are a very wealthy girl, Marcia."

Marcia laughed. "Oh, don't be ridiculous. Besides I only know *you* one day."

"I know but I'm different, I——"

Mallison interrupted them. "Morphew is ready upstairs," he said.

The private room was fitted with a buffet filled with appetizing dishes but Marcia passed it up for the miniature roulette game that had been set up in a corner.

"Let's play!" she cried happily.

"Wouldn't you like to get in on it, too?" Morphew asked Lanyard.

"No. I've always thought roulette too slow," he said. "I like action."

Morphew grasped his opportunity. "The rule of the house," he said, "is, if a man wants action we give it to him. There's another game in the next room that might interest you."

Coolly, he opened the door, and stepped aside for Lanyard to pass.

LANYARD looked around. The room was bare except for a few chairs.

"Where's the big game you spoke about?" he asked.

"Stop acting simple," Morphew said impatiently. "You know we're after the Stewart jewels."

"We?" Lanyard appeared surprised. "Am I in on it?"

"You weren't, but you forced yourself in." Morphew's tone was ugly. "We won't let you pull this job alone without a beef from us."

Lanyard shrugged. "Beef away. It's a free country."

Morphew's voice grew menacing. "This is no time for wisecracks," he said. "I'm making it easy for you. We're working this deal together and I'm counting you in for twenty-five per cent."

Lanyard shook his head. "Sorry. I'm not interested."

"But I can't give you more than twenty-five per cent," Morphew announced flatly. "I got a lot of dough invested in those jewels."

"I'll bet you have. Mallison and Liane must have run up a pretty expense account in Europe."

"When we go after something, we go after it big," Morphew said with sinister meaning. "You'd do a lot of good for yourself operating our way."

"Sorry," insisted Lanyard. "I've got a system of my own and I like it."

"It's behind the times. Lanyard. Things have changed since you went to Europe. You need a mob to-day—organization."

"I'm not very good at organization," Lanyard apologized. "I like to work alone." He moved toward the door. "I appreciate the proposition, but——"

Morphew stopped him. "I'm not making any proposition. I'm telling you the way it's got to be!"

Lanyard smiled patiently to him as he might have done to a stubborn child, and walked without a word to the window in the next room. Good old Jenkins, he noticed, was faithfully watching downstairs. Morphew followed him.

"Now look," Morphew whispered conciliatingly. "Who wants to be tough? Not me. I like to do things in a nice way." He paused to see how this new approach would work, but when he saw that Lanyard was still unimpressed, he became threatinging again. "But if I got to be tough, then——"

Lanyard turned to him. "Just how difficult is it going to be for me to get out of here gracefully?" he asked, abruptly.

Morphew tried to appear hurt. "There you go being unsociable," he complained. "What kind of a host would people think I was if I let you leave too early. We like you, Lanyard. We want you to stick around."

Lanyard realizing that he would not get out without a struggle, looked out of the window again. Morphew misunderstood.

"It's a long jump to the alley," Morphew said. And then, as if to save Lanyard from any further temptation, he reached over and pulled down the shade!

JENKINS was startled out of his reveries from behind the wheel of the roadster on the street below. He jumped from the car and rushed to a phone booth in the corner drug store.

"Give me police headquarters!" he said. "Hello, Headquarters? I want to tell you that Wilfred Willinger is at the Quarter Moon Club—Wilfred Willinger. You know, the murderer you've been chasing for a year. That's right, *Butch* Willinger. He's sitting with a blonde—Oh, this is just a friend of good government. You're welcome, I'm sure."

Jenkins hung up and returned to the roadster to wait for his master. Things were so simple when you knew how, he reflected.

Meanwhile, upstairs, Morphew was fast losing patience with the debonair Lone Wolf. "You think because you went over so big with the girl that you don't need us, eh? Well it won't work that way, see?"

"I see perfectly," Lanyard assured him. "But I still can't join you."

"You'd better," Morphew threatened, grasping his arm angrily, but Marcia's voice from the roulette table interrupted them.

"Will you two stop talking old times and come over here?" she called. "This wheel is a gold mine."

Lanyard and Morphew strolled over as if they were the best of friends. But, under his breath, the Lone Wolf muttered, "Better forget it Morphew. This is one job that won't be pulled off!"

Marcia's number won again. "Wait till mother hears about this!" she cried happily as she raked the chips in. "She always says the gamblers win and the farmers lose."

Lanyard smiled tolerantly. Marcia could not dream, of course, that the wheel was fixed. He knew Morphew was just priming the trap, but he felt the time had come to upset the gambler's plans.

"I wonder," he asked, "what your mother would say if she knew the company you kept?"

"She'd love it," laughed Marcia.

Morphew stiffened. His hand dropped to his hip pocket. Lanyard saw the motion and shook his head with a smile. Morphew realized he was right. That was not the way. Any rough stuff now would wreck the trap he had been six months in building for the theft of the Stewart jewels. But a million dollars was slipping out of his hand unless he struck—and struck quickly! And then he suddenly saw it. The Lone Wolf had left himself wide open.

"I've wondered myself," Morphew said quickly flashing a triumphant glance at Lanyard. "I bet it would floor the lady to hear that you are traveling around with the slickest jewel thief in the world!'

Marcia looked at him, bewildered. "Jewel thief?" she repeated. Morphew shrugged and looked pointedly at Lanyard. Marcia turned to him.

"Michael, what on earth does he mean?"

"Michael Lanyard is the name he uses with you," Morphew volunteered an explanation. "But the police call him the Lone Wolf!"

"I DON'T believe it!" Marcia cried. "It isn't true, is it?"

In vain, her eyes sought denial in his. Try as he might, Michael Lanyard could not bring himself to deceive the girl any longer.

Finally, shattering the deathlike pause with a frenzied cry, Marcia flew out of the room, slamming the door behind her. Liane and Mallison followed her, leaving the trapped Lone Wolf alone with Morphew.

"That wasn't a very nice thing to do, was it?" Morphew confessed.

Lanyard sat down. "I'd say it was perfect," he complimented Morphew. "I didn't think you had it in you."

"You never did give anybody else credit for brains, Lanyard," Morphew admonished him. "How about a drink?"

"Certainly. I always like to drink to a winner."

Morphew called for a waiter. Lanyard looked impatiently at his watch, wondering what was delaying the police.

"I hope you're not in a hurry to go somewhere," Morphew said with mock concern for his guest.

"Oh, no," Lanyard assured him, "just expecting some one."

"It won't do you any good," Morphew warned him. "No one less than the whole police force could get in here if I didn't want them to."

Lanyard smiled. "In that case I'm glad I asked the whole police force to come."

Morphew laughed at the joke. A waiter came in with his right hand deep in his pocket.

"Serve the gentleman a drink," Morphew said.

"Scotch and soda if you can get your hand off your gun long enough to get it," Lanyard suggested. "And I'd like to pour the soda myself."

"Anything my guest wishes," Morphew nodded to the waiter.

Lanyard rose and leaned against the roulette wheel near Morphew. The waiter came up with the Scotch, a siphon and a glass on a tray which he put down beside him on the table.

"I've got another little treat in mind for you," Morphew was saying. "A week-end trip to Jersey, while we do some work here in town at the Stewarts."

Lanyard was pouring the Scotch slowly in his glass. "You mean I have to go with your playmates, here?" he asked, indicating the tough looking waiter.

"Oh, you'll learn to love them," Morphew said. "We'll start as soon as your friend is safely out."

Lanyard picked up the siphon, and dashed soda in his glass. Without putting the siphon down he lifted his drink in salutation to Morphew and then brought it to his lips. Just then bells started ringing—alarm bells! It was the danger signal!

MORPHEW'S smile froze. "Go down and see what it is!" he ordered the waiter.

He pulled a gun from the drawer of the roulette table and held it on Lanyard. "Whatever happens, you're staying with me!"

"Naturally," Lanyard said pouring more seltzer into his glass.

"You're drinking it pretty weak," Morphew sneered.

Lanyard shook his head. "Stronger than you think," he said. In a lightning like gesture, he tilted the siphon and sent a stream of seltzer straight into Morphew's eyes. Blinded, Morphew staggered back.

Lanyard sprang after him like the very wolf he was named for. His powerful left swept Morphew's gun arm aside and his right started a shower of crashing punches to Morphew's jaw!

It was over almost before it began. Lanyard brushed his coat, straightened his hair and rushed downstairs, leaving the bloody and battered Morphew unconscious in the room behind.

The police raid had thrown the place in a panic. Fleeing men—screaming women—furniture crashing—fists and nightsticks! The place was a madhouse. And, somewhere in this hysterical mob, was Marcia!

Lanyard's sharp eyes quickly picked out the Mallisons rushing past the stairs. He scaled the bannister and landed on the floor in front of them.

"Where's Marcia?" he demanded. Then a fat old man scurried between them, the scared couple slipped into a side room, and Michael was left without aid.

He dove through the melee of people, looking for the heiress. Finally he found her huddling terrified in a corner near the kitchen.

"Quick, come with me!" He took her hand.

He started with her for the nearest door, but he saw a blue uniform bearing down on them from that direction. They turned hurriedly. A drunk stopped them. Lanyard swung him around into the policeman's arms and took Marcia through the kitchen door. The service elevator was just inside. With a sigh of relief he flung Marcia into it, and pressed the button control. They had hardly started, when he pressed another button, stopping the car between floors.

"They can't get to us now," he explained putting the light out. "We're all right as long as we don't make too much noise."

Marcia looked at him gratefully through her tears. "W-would it b-be all right if I smoked a cigarette?" she stammered.

"Certainly," said Lanyard. He gave her one from his case and struck a light for her. He saw her hand shake.

"What's the matter? Nervous?" he asked.

"A little," she said. "I've never been in a police raid before."

"They're not as bad as they look," Lanyard consoled her. Then seriously: "But about what Morphew said—I should have told you before, myself. It was all true once. But it isn't any more. I mean, the Lone Wolf is dead!"

Marcia's eyes showed her suffering even in the dim light of the elevator. "I wish I could believe you," she said.

"You can!" Lanyard insisted. "He died the night you didn't turn me over to the police. He——"

HIS sharp ear trained in a hundred such escapades caught the slamming of a door.

"Wait," he said. They listened for a moment in silence. "It's quieted down," he finally decided. "It should be safe to leave now."

They slipped out through a side door and crossed to the car. Jenkins drove them to Marcia's home. Lanyard was so happy at the way the evening had ended that he did not notice Crane trailing him. Nor did Crane know that a third car was following his!

Two hours later, Marcia was saying "Good night" to Lanyard at her door. They had talked happily of the future, forgetting for the moment the unlovely past.

"Remember," she admonished, "you're not to climb any second stories on the way home. Promise?"

"I promise," smiled the Lone Wolf.

"And no stealing of milk or rolls."

"Not even a morning paper."

"And dream about me, not my jewels."

"Right," promised the "slickest jewel thief in the world" heartily. And he was gone.

MICHAEL LANYARD'S bell rang again early the next morning. Jenkins crossed to the door curiously and at his touch of the knob, the door flew open. Detective Crane burst in, angrily waving a newspaper. Jenkins tried to stop him but the detective shoved him aside.

"Out of my way, you pup!" he shouted, "Where's Mike Lanyard?"

Jenkins fell into the safe routine he always used when he sensed trouble. "I'm sorry, sir, but Mr. Lanyard is not——"

"Don't play butler with me!" Crane roared. "Where is he?"

Lanyard appeared in the door of his bedroom, happy and at peace with all the world. He was just finishing dressing.

"Crane!" he exclaimed pleasantly. "Are you going to call on me *every* morning?"

The detective started across the room for him, wildly waving the newspaper. "Never mind the cover-up," he said curtly. "I've seen nasty slimy tricks in my time, Lanyard, but you've come in with a new low!"

Lanyard looked at him startled.

"I almost went for that routine you handed the Stewart girl," Crane continued contemptuously. "I never figured you for a high-pressure ladies' man. I thought you took your chances like a man." He thrust the paper in Lanyard's face. "But this is curtains for you."

Lanyard saw the shouting headlines for the first time and grabbed the paper. The story monopolized the front page.

> THIEF GETS ROUND MILLION
>
> Famed Jewel Collection Disappears
>
> The well-known Stewart jewels disappeared last night into the hands of the underworld when the home of Miss Marcia Stewart, daughter of the late railroad king——

Lanyard looked up from the paper. "You don't think I did this?" he asked bewildered.

"I've got a complete case against you," Crane assured him.

"If you have, somebody framed it," Lanyard answered.

"There's sixty thousand other guys who were framed sitting in jail right now," Crane told him. "Quit stalling, Lanyard. I've got you, and I'm sending you so far up the river, it'll be a trickle when you get there!"

THE Lone Wolf realized that he was in a real spot. "Look here, Crane," he said. "I don't deny that I was in that house last night, but——"

"I know all about it, Mike," the detective stopped him. "I saw you go in myself. You were in that house a lot longer than your invitation called for. You left the Stewart girl at four. But you didn't come off the grounds until four-thirty." Crane paused to let that sink in. "What'd you do in that half hour?"

Lanyard gestured helplessly. "You wouldn't believe it, but I leaned against a tree, smoked a cigarette—and watched the moon."

The detective scoffed. "Mike, you're slipping. Using the moon for an alibi. And it doesn't explain the cigarette butt we found in the same room with the safe—with your fingerprints on it. How did that get there?"

"I can make a guess," said Lanyard without much hope. "A crook clever enough to pull the Stewart job might have picked up my butt and planted it there."

"It's a bad guess," said Crane disgusted. "Get a hat on. We're going downtown to pick a number for you."

Lanyard became desperate. The whole world he had rebuilt last night from the ruin Morphew had made of it was crashing about his ears again. He grasped the detective's arm earnestly.

"Crane," he begged, "I'll take the rap for any case you've ever had against me, but not this case. I didn't do it. And you've got to give me the chance to prove that! Give me till midnight!"

Crane refused to listen to him. "You'll get your chance in front of twelve men and a judge," he told him. "I couldn't give you till midnight even if I wanted to, and I don't! I told them I'll bring you in and you're coming along!"

Lanyard gave in. "All right," he said. He called to his butler. "Jenkins, bring me my hat and gloves. You know, the steel-gray ones."

Jenkins came in with the hat and gloves. Michael took them, dropped his hand inside his hat and produced a gun pointed directly at Crane's paunch.

"I hate to do this, Crane," he said, "but you're forcing me to it. I need this chance to prove that I'm in the clear. You won't give it to me so I have to take it. Will you please step into the closet behind you?"

"You'll never get away with this," Crane raged backing up before Lanyard's gun. "You won't get out of the city."

"I'm not going to try," Lanyard told him grimly as he locked the closet door. "I'm going to bring in the right people and square myself with you and the Stewarts. Or I'll surrender in your office at midnight!"

JENKINS climbed behind the wheel of the roadster and started driving downtown at breakneck speed without waiting for directions from his master.

"Where do you think you're going?" asked Lanyard.

"To the station, of course," answered Jenkins, surprised at the question. "We're leaving town, aren't we?"

"We may be leaving town," Lanyard told him. "But if we do, it'll be after midnight and Crane'll be buying the tickets."

Jenkins' face dropped. "You're not going to be sentimental about keeping your word to a detective?" he asked. Then, on second thought, "Or if it's the girl, may I say, ' 'Tis better to have loved and lost——' " He paused. "Much better," he added.

"No," said Lanyard firmly. "We're going to spend the day housebreaking."

But an afternoon of fruitless housebreaking put Jenkins in a skeptical and troubled mood. "You've found nothing at Mr. Morphew's apartment. The house detective almost caught us at Mr. Mallison's. You've searched that Liane person's rooms—our last hope, you said—and it got us no place."

"There's just one more chance—a slim one," Lanyard answered. "It depends on Morphew having a hide-out somewhere!" He tore a hundred dollar bill in two. "Take this half to Cole's pawn shop and plant it. We're going to put the heat on him!"

Thirty precious minutes later, Lanyard strode into the pawn shop. Cole came forward, rubbing his hands.

"What can I do for you, sir?" he asked.

"A great deal, Mr. Coleman," said Lanyard.

The man behind the counter looked up sharply. "Where'd you get that name?"

"Sorry," Lanyard apologized. "It's my mistake. Coleman's the name of a man wanted in Boston for passing stolen goods."

"My name is Cole," the pawn broker told him coldly, "and I don't know you."

Lanyard leaned across the counter. "Okay!" he said agreeably. "We'll get acquainted. I'm from headquarters."

The pawn broker backed away frightened. "Lieutenant, you've got the wrong man," he protested.

"You'll get a chance to prove that before twelve men and a judge," Lanyard told him, imitating Crane's best detective manner.

"But I ain't done nothing," Cole pleaded.

"Don't jaw-bone me!" Lanyard banged angrily on the counter. "You've been receiving stolen goods for the Lone Wolf!"

"Lieutenant, you're crazy. I never saw the Lone Wolf in my life. Nobody ever did."

Michael looked witheringly at him. He took out his wallet, removed his half of the hundred dollar bill. He thrust it in Cole's face.

"But you did see this, didn't you?" he barked.

Hypnotized with terror, Cole stared at the bill. "I don't know nothin' about that," he quavered.

"Stop stalling," Lanyard became

threatening. "It came out of the Lone Wolf's wallet. We got him in jail. You got the other half of the bill under"—he glanced around hurriedly—"under that clock, there!" He reached across the counter to a clock on the shelf and took a torn half of a hundred dollar bill from under it.

The pawn broker stared horrified. "This is a frame-up," he blubbered.

"There are sixty thousand other guys who were framed sitting in jail right now," Lanyard rasped, borrowing Crane's words again. "We know how the Lone Wolf's butler came here and handed you the stuff, using this as identification. We got the whole set-up. You'd better come clean!"

COLE leaned forward confidentially. "Listen, can't we make a deal?" he suggested.

Lanyard toyed with the two halves of the torn bill.

"All right," Lanyard said. "You know a couple of guys named Mastro and Koster?"

"Sure. Morphew's bodyguards." The relieved Cole mopped his forehead. "They come in here all the time."

"Good. Those men are over at Tierney's, the bookmaker's, around the corner. Call them up and tell them the Lone Wolf got away from the cops and is on his way to Morphew's hide-out. He's going there to hi-jack the Stewart jewels."

"I don't get this," said the pawn broker.

"You don't have to," Lanyard snapped. "Just do it."

"All right, all right," Cole quailed, picking up the phone.

Lanyard waited to see that the pawn broker got the message across all right. Then he dashed out to Jenkins who was waiting in the car with the motor running. "Quick," he said. "Around the corner."

As they turned the block they saw Morphew's two thugs rush out and jump into a waiting cab.

"Now we're getting somewhere," cried Lanyard as Jenkins shot the car after them. He glanced at his watch. It was already nine-thirty.

The cab drew up before a fashionable apartment hotel. At the corner behind them Lanyard gave Jenkins his hat and stepped out. Jenkins continued with the car grazing the back fender of the gangsters' cab. The two thugs paying their fare looked up and saw Lanyard's roadster and his soft hat visible as the car sped away.

"That's the guy!" Koster cried. "He beat us here." He pushed his partner back into the cab. "Follow him," he told the driver.

THE clock struck ten as Lanyard, hatless, entered Morphew's emergency hide-out.

In Morphew's office at that moment, Morphew and the Mallisons, a million dollars richer, were gloating expansively.

"It worked like a charm!" Morphew said. "Nobody's in the grease but Lanyard."

"And Marcia Stewart," Liane reminded him with a laugh.

"I did the best I could for her," Morphew said sarcastically. "I told her the kind of a heel she was doing a spin for. If she fell for Lanyard after that, it's her own fault." He smiled. "You know, a trip to Europe would do that girl's heart a lot of good."

"You mean, with us?" asked Mallison.

"Sure. Traveling with friends like us would make her forget."

"But this is no pleasure trip," Liane objected. "We're taking those stones out."

"That's just the idea," Morphew smiled cunningly. "We're leaving the country and Marcia Stewart without knowing it will be carrying the jewels for us. If the police get the drop on us, we're in the clear and she has to explain why she's lugging a million dollars' worth of jewels which she reported stolen."

"That's a honey of an idea!" said Mallison admiringly.

Morphew turned to Liane. "Do you think you can sell her the idea of leaving tonight?"

"Me? Her best pal?" exclaimed Liane confidently. "And you ask?"

AT eleven Lanyard was still fruitlessly going through Morphew's study, looking for the jewels which he knew had to be in that apartment.

Liane was at Marcia's. "Sitting at home brooding won't help," she told her.

"But leaving so soon——" Marcia protested.

"The sooner you get away, the quicker you'll forget," Liane argued. "By the time we finish Biarritz and Nice it will be——"

"Excuse me, Miss Marcia," the butler interrupted, "but the gentleman from police headquarters is here, again."

Liane paled.

Marcia jumped to her feet, her thin-worn nerves snapping at last. "What, again?" she screamed.

"I'm sorry to bother you, Miss Stewart," apologized Crane who had followed the butler in, "but I'd like another look at the carpet in the library."

"But this is the third time to-day! I won't go with you! You'll have to go alone! Mrs. Mallison is visiting me!" Her voice grew shriller with every breath.

"Mallison?" Crane looked at Liane with interest. "That's strange. There's a Mallison who's booked passage on the *Normandie.*"

"What's strange about that?" demanded Liane.

"Oh, nothing at all," Crane passed it off. "I've just been studying the passenger lists. Matter of course, you know, after a big robbery. I guess I'll go look at the carpet." He left.

Marcia turned to Liane. "I've made up my mind. I'm going."

"Perfect!" Liane cried, relieved. "Will it take long to pack?"

"No, I was all packed to leave for the South, anyway."

"Good. I'll make arrangements and call you when we're ready."

Liane hurried out. Crane who was waiting outside followed her as she rushed to the nearest phone booth. She dialed her number feverishly.

IT was eleven-thirty and Lanyard was frantically wondering where else in the apartment to look. He had already covered every possible hiding place two and even three times. In the midst of his quandary the phone rang. He waited a moment undecided. Then, desperately hoping it might be his lucky break, he picked it up and muttered a muffled, "Hello."

"Morphew, listen," Liane's excited voice came over the wires. "Don't ask any questions. We're in a jam."

"Talk fast," muttered Lanyard.

"Crane's wise. He knows we're sailing. I think he figures we got the stuff."

Crane in the adjoining booth smiled. A mighty clever girl, he thought to himself.

"I'd get the stuff out of there," Liane suggested earnestly.

"They'd never find it," Lanyard mumbled, hoping to draw her out.

"That fireplace is the first spot they'd go to!" Liane said emphatically.

"Mm-m-m," Lanyard assented.

"I'll be right over," Liane said, hanging up.

Lanyard returned the receiver to its hook and darted to the fireplace. He eyed the decorative metal centerpiece on the mantel, wondering how he could have missed it. Happily lighting a cigarette, he set to work to recover the stolen gems!

SOON a million dollars was gleaming in his hands! He pocketed it and started for the front door with a singing heart but the noise of a key in the lock stopped him. Recognizing Morphew's voice outside, he rushed back and scribbled a hasty note. Dropping it into Morphew's safe and slamming it shut, he ran out of the room toward the servant's entrance.

Morphew and Mallison were put on their guard by the fresh smoke of the Lone Wolf's cigarette as soon as they opened the door. However, they advanced into the room, continuing their conversation as if nothing had happened so as not to let the intruder know they suspected anything. They were stalling for time until they could reach the center table where Morphew kept his gun!

They did reach it but, as Mallison touched the drawer, Lanyard's voice whipped out. "It's over here, boys," he said crisply.

The two looked around into the muzzle of an automatic sticking out from behind the drapes separating the library from the dining room. They made a move forward but the gun was thrust forward threateningly.

"No, no! Up!" said Lanyard.

Their hands went up. Liane rushed in breathless at this moment and stopped dumbstruck. Crane burst in almost on her heels, followed by two more detectives.

"Gangway, sister," he ordered, brandishing his gun. Then, to the man behind the drapes, "O. K. Drop it."

But the gun didn't fall!

Crane crossed the room angrily and pulled the drapes aside. There was no one there—only the gun stuck in the crotch of a chair. The room behind was empty. The detective turned to the two puzzled men who were bringing their hands down.

"What are you two guys doing—practicing?" he asked.

"Well—we were——" Mallison started. But Crane wasn't listening. He crossed over to the fireplace and instinctively picked out the centerpiece.

"All right, Morphew," he said tapping the hidden safe. "Open it up."

Morphew knew the game was up, but pretended to make a show of sticking up for his rights. "On what authority?" he challenged. "You have no warrant."

Crane raised the automatic. "Here are six warrants I just picked up," he dryly said. "Do you want to argue?"

Morphew opened the safe while Liane and Mallison watched him tensely. When the door swung out, Crane stepped up and removed the strong box himself. He felt a sick sensation in the pit of his stomach when he realized the box was empty.

Then he saw the note in the bottom of the box. He read it without letting the others know it was there. "Here are the people you wanted," it said. "The jewels are on show at the Stewart home." There was no signature, but Crane needed none to tell him whose handiwork was before him.

He smiled and palmed the note before turning the box over to show that it was empty. The three jewel thieves gave each other quick knowing looks.

"You'll have to excuse me, Mr. Morphew," Crane apologized. "You know how it is—a little mistake—they happen every——"

"Your apologies are too late, Crane," Morphew interrupted him with great indignation. "You'll hear more from the commissioner about this. It'll be a pleasure to break you out of the department. Breaking and entering without a warrant——"

"I'm sorry," Crane was still contrite. "But if there's anything I can do——"

"Get out!" Morphew snapped.

Crane went out, but in closing the door he snapped the catch on the lock. He knew he was coming back!

MORPHEW slapped Mallison on the back heartily as the policeman left. "Mal, that was smart, getting rid of the stones. They were plenty hot!"

Mallison refused the credit. "I don't get the medal," he protested modestly. "Give it to Liane here. *She's* the smart baby."

Liane backed against a table. *"Me?* I was never near them. What is this, Morphew, a gag?"

Morphew's voice became ominous. "What do you mean, a gag?"

Liane regained control of herself. "You told me only fifteen minutes ago, you were taking care of them."

"I? I told you?"

"Sure, over the phone!"

Mallison became angry now. "Come on, Morphew, this won't get us anywhere. What did you do with the stuff? We all get a slice of that Stewart haul."

Morphew was genuinely puzzled. "I don't know what you're trying to put over," he said, "but I know I haven't been near that safe since this afternoon when I put them in! Where was Liane while you kept me down at the office tonight?"

"Cut that," Mallison stopped him. "You know you put them in and you took them out again, you double crossing——"

"I'm a double-crosser?" Morphew raged suddenly. "Why you two timing crook!"

"Morphew, you're just a fool if you think you can get away with this," Liane said coldly, leveling her gun on him.

"And you're even more of a fool if you think you can get away with that haul without me!" he said backing away before her automatic.

"Damn you, quit stalling!" Liane flamed. Then as Morphew suddenly smiled and Mallison looked horrified, "I warn you, I won't kill you. I'll shoot you apart piece by piece. I'll——"

Liane felt the gun suddenly drawn out of her hand from behind!

"Now, now," said Detective Crane. He had noiselessly returned, entering the room from behind the furious woman. "You'll get nowhere that way. We'll all ride down to headquarters nicely and talk this whole thing over with the commissioner." He turned to Morphew. "You'll tell him how I broke in. And I'll tell him how you broke in."

Morphew shrugged resignedly. "Every time I get ready to go to Europe," he complained, "somebody always slips me in jail."

ON the way out, Crane passed the big hall clock and suddenly remembered something. "Johnson," he called to one of his men, "rush over to the Stewart home for Michael Lanyard." Johnson started out.

"Wait!" Crane called him back. He wrote a hasty note and gave it to him. "Take the squad car and get there as fast as you can." He looked at the clock again. "You may be too late, even now."

At the Stewart home, Marcia lied to the policeman. "Mr. Lanyard isn't here," she said.

"If he's not here, he'll be coming here," Johnson insisted.

"You must be mistaken," Marcia told him nervously.

The bluecoat was stubborn. "All I know is what I'm told, lady, and I was told to leave this note for him."

"Oh," cried Marcia, brightening. "Then you can give it to me. Thanks."

She closed the door in the puzzled policeman's face, and ran in to Lanyard with the note. Huddled on a sofa, their arms entwined, their cheeks touching, they read:

"Never mind hurrying to see me tonight. You're in the clear on the Stewart case and thanks for doing me a good job. We'll see the D. A. in the morning. I think he'll want to shake hands with you.
Crane."

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 3

IF YOU COULD ONLY COOK

A Columbia picture, with Jean Arthur, Herbert Marshall, Leo Carrillo and Gene Morgan.

Jean Arthur just *has* to get a job. And Herbert Marshall can't stand the looks of his blue-blooded family any more. So one thing leads to another, and William Seiter (the director who was responsible for such gay comedies as "The Richest Girl in the World." "Roberta," and "Orchids to You,") makes it highly amusing to follow.

THIS ARTHUR GIRL IS FAST BECOMING THE TOP COMEDIENNE OF HOLLYWOOD. SHE'S ALL THERE!

PANIC ON THE AIR

A Columbia picture, with Ann Sothern, Lloyd Nolan, Thurston Hall, Douglas Dumbrille, and Robert Middlemass.

Exciting, if jumbled, this one tells the story of a radio man who discovers how to force broadcasting stations off the air by "bombarding" them with counteractive ether waves. Gangsters kidnap him in a real 1936 abduction, and try to cash in on his innocent and accidental discovery. There is much that might not sound plausible in this one, but you'll enjoy it just the same.

WHY HAVEN'T SOME OTHER COMPANIES DISCOVERED THAT THERE IS GOOD MATERIAL FOR MOVIES IN BROADCASTING STATIONS?

HANDS ACROSS THE TABLE

A Paramount picture, with Carole Lombard, Fred MacMurray, Ralph Bellamy, Marie Prevost, and Ruth Donnelly.

Good gags, well paced comedy and great performances make this a show of shows. The plot isn't much—a money-mad manicurist falls for a busted millionaire's son—but then the plot never matters in a picture as entertaining as this. It's the gags that count, and the way the lovely Lombard yells, the way Fred MacMurray calmly accepts whatever is coming next, the way Ralph Bellamy tries not to make love—they're the things that make this film a great piece of entertainment.

MACMURRAY AND BELLAMY USED TO BE GOOD, TWO-FISTED HEROES. THEY'RE BETTER THAN EVER, NOW THAT HOLLYWOOD LETS THEM REALLY ACT.

Continued on page 65

LAST of the PAGANS . . .

One happy, care-free South Seas native is betrayed by the white men—and finds his revenge in sudden death!

IN the deep warm cavern of his muscular chest, the heart of Mala, mightest of all the Tofoan hunters, began to hammer with accelerated tempo.

The beauty of the maiden he had marked down for his own was all but breathtaking!

Mala was oblivious to the presence of all else. Oblivious even to the nearness of his tribal Chief, who lay beside him in close concealment at the lower end of the island pool.

For Mala, who never before had deigned to notice the charms of any maid, knew that at last he was looking upon the only girl in all the South Sea Islands, whom he could ever be content to call "his woman."

It was early morning. Under cover of darkness the big Tofoan war canoe, manned by twenty young paddlers and bearing the Chief and Mala and a dozen other warriors—a raiding party in search of mates—had reached this neighboring island. The high prowed craft lay at this moment in a secluded cove, well removed from the island village.

She fought like a tigress. . . . Without wasting a word, he carried her easily back to the crest of the hill.

Its presence could have been detected only by the occupants of some early morning fishing canoe—a chance which the raiders needs must take.

Only the Chief, Mala and one other warrior had come ashore from the canoe. Stealing soundlessly through dense brush, they had located the pool where the village maidens bathed and played in the early morning sun.

Quickly the Chief had sent the other warrior back to the canoe, with word that the women had been found. Now the Chief and Mala lay side by side, concealed in heavy tropical foliage, watching their quarry and awaiting the arrival of their companion raiders. Then a rapid, flashing raid and they would fly!

THE deep pool, crystal clear and sparkling in golden sunlight, lay at the

The ship's crew had taken Lilleo away from Mala.

bottom of a broad ribbon of water which came pouring musically across the lip of a high hedge. It was fed by a rivulet descending tortuously in a series of falls from the island's one small mountain.

At this pool a score of laughing, carefree native girls were disporting themselves with the joyous abandon of happy children. Some were swimming, diving gracefully from the high ledge, floating idly on the surface of the pool. Some were sitting on its rocky brink, absorbing sunshine, helping each other with their morning toilettes. Their gayly colored pareus, wet and clinging, revealed every alluring curve of their lithe young bodies.

But it was none of these on the bank who held the rapt attention of hidden Mala. His gaze was upon the face of one who had just broken to the surface from the depths of the pool—a girl with wide brown eyes and jet black hair, and

CAST

MALA ....Mala

LOTUS ....Lilleo

Produced by
Philip Goldstone

Directed by
Richard Thorpe.

Story and Screenplay by
John Villiers Farrow

A fictionization of the M-G-M picture of the same title.

smooth wet skin the color of strained honey.

She was Lilleo, most beautiful and most popular of all the village maidens.

"Lilleo! Lilleo!" The call came from the lips of a girl who stood at the crest of the falls, with a freshly plucked gardenia poised for tossing.

Lilleo shook the wet hair from her eyes and laughingly reached up both hands to receive the flower. But the throw was short; the gardenia landed on a small rock close at the water's edge. Lilleo made for it; but another girl mischievously intervened, intent on gaining the prize.

She almost succeeded, before Lilleo was upon her. Then, for full five minutes, the pool resounded to shouts and laughter as the two fought a good-natured aquatic battle royal—a struggle from which Lilleo emerged victorious, with the vanquished girl minus her pareu, which the others gayly strove to keep just beyond her frantic reachings.

Lilleo looked for the gardenia. It was gone, washed away by the commotion of the battle. The girl at the brink of the falls tossed her another blossom. She caught it deftly, placed it in her hair above her left ear—island badge of maidenhood, of a girl heart whole and fancy free.

The heart of Mala pounded in his chest. His strong hand, clutching the long spear at his side, trembled with repressed emotions. He half rose, as if he would go at once to this woman of his choice. But the quick hand of the Chief restrained him.

Mala drew back unwillingly. He gestured toward Lilleo.

"If Chief permits," he whispered tensely, "that one pleases Mala!"

Mala's attention was all for Lilleo. He did not see the sudden covetous glitter that came to dwell in the Chief's black eyes, as they silently took in the fresh young beauty of Lilleo.

Mala's impatience was mounting. The older man held him back with a grave warning:

"Wait! Wait for the others——"

AS silently as hunters stalking wild game, the other raiders joined the Chief and Mala at the pool. Impatiently Mala waited for the Chief's signal, his determined eyes intent upon Lilleo. He saw her climb a shelf-like rock at the far side of the pool.

The signal came! Like a brown avalanche the raiders broke from concealment. Mala was in the lead. He plunged straight across the pool's outlet, headed for Lilleo.

Swift panic broke out among the startled girls. Screaming hysterically, they strove to evade their grim pursuers. Lilleo, quick and graceful as a startled deer, made straight away up the slope of the hill along the rushing stream.

Mala paid no heed to the fortunes of his fellow warriors. He was intent upon capturing Lilleo. Steadily he gained ground, shortened the distance between them. He saw Lilleo pause for breath, saw her glance this way and that like a harried rabbit in search of some sure avenue of escape.

She made as if to cross the stream. But the raiding Chief, intent upon her capture for himself, had skirted the pool and was climbing fast along the far side of the torrent. With a choking scream she continued her flight along the watercourse.

Suddenly, above the pounding of his heart, above the wild confusion down around the pool, Mala heard the distant bellowing of a frantically blown conch shell. It came from the direction of the beach—a signal, warning the raiders that their canoe had been discovered by the islanders!

Swiftly, the blowing of the conch was overridden by a louder sound—the hollow, throaty booming of a great log war drum! The menacing voice of Death

Mala had not heard her piteous cries——

itself, crawling up through jungle growth from the island village!

The Chief halted in his tracks, swung back toward the pool shouting an order for his men to escape, to flee to the safety of the canoe.

Mala glanced back, saw his fellow warriors loosing their captive women, plunging headlong into the brush. He knew well that the order to retreat had been given; but he did not slacken his quick pursuit of Lilleo. Heedless of any danger to himself, heedless of the miniature avalanches of rocks and dirt loosened by her desperately climbing feet, he pressed on after her.

Lilleo, aware that he was gaining, aware of imminent capture, strove to elude him by making a frantic effort to cross the stream. She slipped, lost footing, and was swiftly whirled away in the grip of the rushing torrent.

Mala flung away his spear and plunged after her. A dozen mighty strokes brought him within reach of her pareu. A moment later she was struggling, fighting, kicking in his arms. He laughed with joyous triumph, and held her tightly. And so they were carried by the rush of the stream, swirling down to the brink of the falls and over, into the sunshot depths of the pool.

Shaken, breathless, they came at length to the surface, with Mala's possessive grip still unbroken. He kicked his way to the edge of the pool and hauled Lilleo out upon the bank. She fought like a tigress. She kicked and bit and scratched her captor, and loosed upon him a blistering tirade of Polynesian abuse. Mala bore it with the smile of a satisfied conqueror. And without wasting a single word, he swung her across his broad shoulders and carried her easily back to the crest of the hill.

MALA, in his hot pursuit and capture of Lilleo, had lost all thought or reckoning of passing time. But now at the crest of the hill, with the great war drum throbbing ominously in his ears, he paused in quick dismay. The grin left his face.

From this vantage point he could see the cove where the canoe had lain. Now the filled craft was making fast away from the island, under the drive of desperate paddles. The realization struck home to Mala that he had been deserted by his companions.

The situation dawned swiftly upon Lilleo. She laughed derisively. He set her down upon her feet. She struggled to escape, but he held her in a grip of iron.

Shouts of village warriors, beating upward along the brushy slope, assailed Mala's ears. He looked swiftly about; no place offered concealment. Quickly he dragged his unwilling captive back toward the stream. A warrior shouted, uncomfortably near the crest of the slope. Lilleo voiced a piercing cry for help.

Mala shook her gently by the shoulders, motioned her to be silent. Her answer was a defiant scream, fair in his face. It brought a chorus of wild answers from the bush beaters. Lilleo screamed again.

Mala was desperate. Capture meant certain death. He hated to do it, but could see no other course. Swiftly, he drove a doubled fist against the point of Lilleo's chin. She sagged, inert and senseless, in his arms.

With great leaping strides, Mala carried his unconscious captive back down the tumbling watercourse. At the margin of the pool he paused to listen. The warriors had topped the hill, were beating down along the way he had come. Unless he should find safe hiding, it would only be a matter of time before he must be captured.

His quick gaze rested for a moment upon the waterfall pouring into the pool. Without hesitation he splashed upstream again. Shielding Lilleo as best he could, he took a deep breath and plunged straight into and through the swiftly falling curtain of bright water.

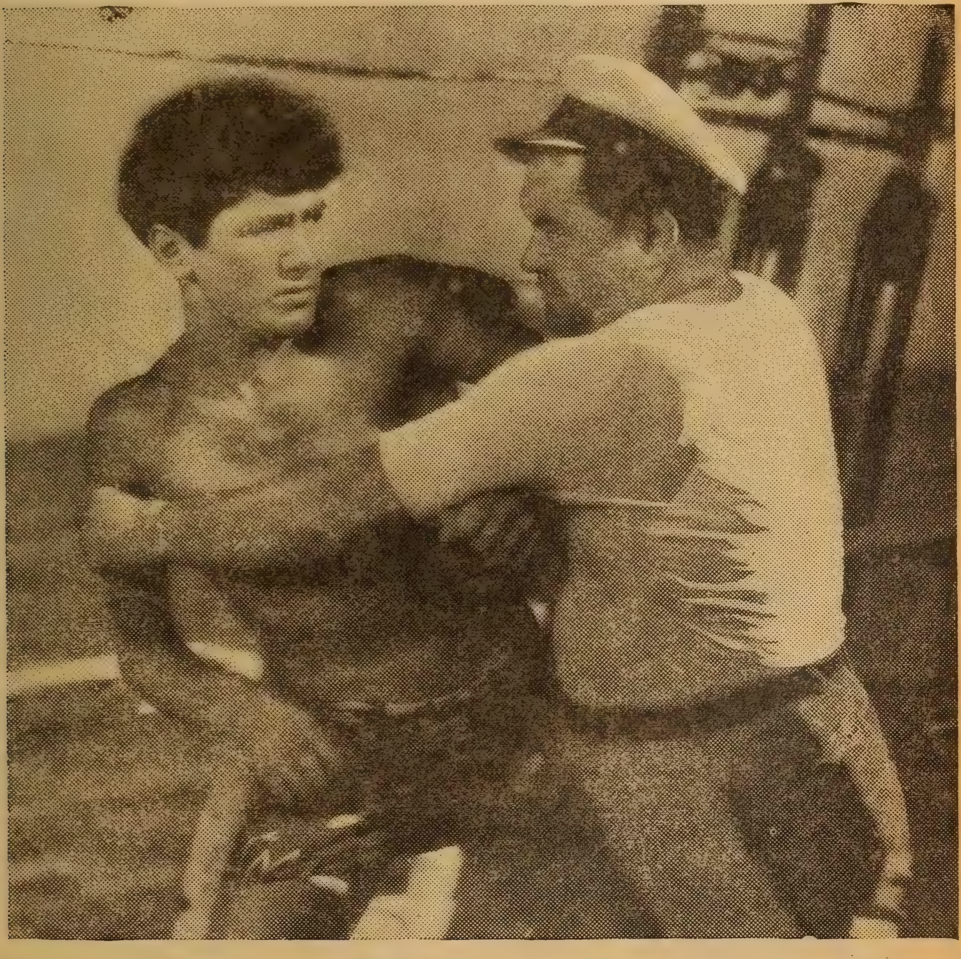
The overhang of the ledge formed a shallow cavern behind the falls. Mala drew back into the farthest corner. Here he and Lilleo were completely screened from view.

Mala had achieved concealment not a moment too soon. Above the hiss and rumble of the falling water, he could hear the yells of the village warriors as they beat through the foliage in the vicinity of the pool. They were as noisy as a pack of mongrels yapping on the trail of a wounded pig! Mala grinned with quiet content.

After all sounds of pursuit finally had died away, Mala cautiously emerged from hiding, carrying the still unconscious Lilleo. In a shielding patch of dense shrubbery, well away from the pool, he laid her gently down upon a couch of soft mossy earth. Her nearness brought a strange, sweet tightness to his throat, a softness to his eyes——

Gently, he smoothed away the wet hair from her brow. And, gently, his fingers caressed the soft smooth roundness of her cheek.

In the distance, the village war drum



He learned that the paper he had marked was a white man's contract binding him to twelve months of labor on Patua.

still beat on with savage rhythm. Mala's heart was pounding in time with the beating of the drum—but not with savagery; he was filled to the uttermost cell of his being with a worshipful tenderness toward this maiden who was his by right of capture.

IT was another day——

Exultantly, with mighty lifting strokes of his paddle, Mala drove the light outrigger canoe through the creaming gap in the barrier reef, and into the sunlit blue waters of his own home lagoon.

Lilleo was crouched in the bow of the craft, her slender back stubbornly presented to Mala's smiling gaze. Despite his best efforts at friendliness, she was still a sullen captive.

Yesterday, to keep her quiet after she had recovered her senses, Mala had assumed toward her a fierceness which he was far from feeling. It had proved effective. Lilleo had given him no great trouble.

By lurking close in the vicinity of the pool with his captive, Mala had managed to evade discovery by Lilleo's people. And under cover of night, he had succeeded in getting her aboard a canoe in her own village lagoon. His flight with Lilleo had been undetected.

Now he was bringing his woman home. Home to the island of Tofoa; to the little village of thatched huts nestling between a curving ribbon of dazzling white sand and a cool shady fringe of palm trees.

A noisy, excited crowd of his own people—men, women and children—was hastening down across the beach to meet the incoming canoe. Cries of, "Mala! Mala!" filled the air. Glad cries of welcome.

Proudly, with strong muscles rippling under his smooth bronzed skin, Mala drove the canoe ashore. Lilleo made no move. She was a little subdued by her first look at this new world into which she had been plunged. She offered no objection when Mala, splashing alongside through knee deep water, lifted her triumphantly and swung her lightly to the beach.

"You have done well, Mala," called out an old man in the crowd. "She will bear strong babies."

Mala swung to the canoe. His heart was near bursting with pride. With one quick surge of his splendid strength, he drew the canoe high and dry upon the sand.

When he turned back, he saw that the crowd had parted, saw the Chief standing before Lilleo. She seemed frozen with passive fear. The Chief was taking full stock of her, testing the vigor of her hair, jerking up her chin, examining her teeth as if she were a prize cow.

Mala's face darkened. He strode quickly forward, thrust Lilleo behind him, took upon himself the brunt of the Chief's piercing gaze.

"Already three women sit in the Chief's house," said Mala grimly. "This one is Mala's woman!"

THE older man drew himself erect. "I am Chief!" he declared regally.

Mala was not intimidated. "The law of our tribe says that man who wins woman keeps woman!" he asserted doggedly. "This is Mala's woman!"

For a moment the eyes of the two men remained locked. Then Mala quickly took Lilleo by the hand. She did not resist him. Passively, she allowed him to lead her through the crowd and across the white beach toward the village.

Heedless of the following crowd, Mala did not pause until he reached a small thatched hut at the end of the street. Here a still, grave faced woman stood ready to receive them. This was Mala's mother. Solemnly she touched cheeks with her son. Then, after a long and silently critical inspection of Lilleo, she said gravely:

"Mala's mother gives welcome to a new daughter."

"This woman is not your daughter!"

He tried to launch the ship's small boat. The crew set upon him. He knocked two or three of them senseless before another beat him down. . . .

declared Lilleo with bitter determination.

"Mala is my son."

"This woman is not Mala's woman!"

Lilleo's protestations brought a sudden twinkle into the eyes of the older woman. She nodded toward the watching crowd, said significantly:

"The young woman is comely. If she does not want Mala, other men wait——"

Lilleo swung quickly, saw half a dozen of the village men ogling and smiling at her. None was as young or handsome as Mala. She regarded them scornfully.

But suddenly the scorn gave way to an expression of fear. Behind those ogling men stood the Chief. His piercing eyes were fixed upon her steadily, possessively. Instinctively she sensed menace in his attitude. Swiftly she turned and slipped inside the hut of Mala's mother.

The older woman followed. Mala would have entered, too, but she motioned him away. He yielded without argument, for in his heart he was certain, that the great and tender love he bore for Lilleo, would some day find response in her.

LILLEO'S capitulation to this love of Mala's came with dramatic suddenness, after long weeks during which all of Mala's ceremonious tribute to the woman of his choice, had failed to break down her sullen antagonism.

It came on a day when Mala, seeking Lilleo among thick island brush, came upon her just in time to save her from the ripping tusks of a maddened wild boar.

The frothing brute, transfixed at last by Mala's spear after terrific battle, fell almost at Lilleo's feet.

The ordeal had unnerved her. Womanlike, she wanted to cry. Quickly Mala took her in his arms, soothed her, comforted her. Her surrender was complete.

Mala led her to the side of a nearby spring. Here they threw themselves upon the ground and drank, side by side, like two happy animals.

As they straightened up, their heads close together, Lilleo gave to Mala a smile of shy tenderness. He smiled back at her. Their faces came together in the native kiss.

"Mala will always protect his woman," he told her gently.

"Mala's woman's name Lilleo," she said softly. "Lilleo."

He repeated the name, over and over; and it was sweet to him.

They turned again to the spring, heads close together, to look at their smiling reflections in the crystal water. As they did so, the gardenia above Lilleo's left ear became dislodged and fell. Mala retrieved it. Lilleo took it from him, replaced it in her hair—this time above her right ear.

"Lilleo's heart is no longer free," she said simply.

Mala was in the seventh heaven of rapture. Lilleo was completely his woman now, by her own surrender. He quickly placed around her throat his own shark's-teeth necklace—which once before she had flung back in his face—and took her in his arms.

As he gazed deep into her wide dark eyes, luminous now with her own love unreservedly given, their ears were startled by the distant boom of a ship's cannon.

They sprang hurriedly to their feet. Mala parted the foliage, looked out upon the sea. Beyond the reef a dilapidated, dirty-flanked, two-masted auxiliary schooner was hauling to. A white man's ship, and one which never before had visited this island!

Mala's vision was keen. He could discern, standing spread-legged upon the ship's poop deck, a burly, bearded ruffian who no doubt was master of the craft. A negroid half-caste had the wheel behind him. The crew, jumping to the big man's orders, hastily lowering sail, were a conglomerate mixture of races—the scum of the South Seas ports.

These things Mala saw, but they meant nothing to his trustful, unspoiled mind. Here was a white man's ship come to visit Tofoa! There would be presents for the islanders—perhaps something fine and glittering, with which to adorn his woman, Lilleo!

Eagerly he seized her by the hand. Excited as two children, they raced side by side toward the lagoon.

The ship's cannon boomed again.

Neither Mala nor Lilleo could guess it, but that sound was for them the clanking of the gate of Hell!

FIVE months——

For Mala, five long months of blistering hell, swinging a heavy pick in the choking phosphate quarries of faraway Patua.

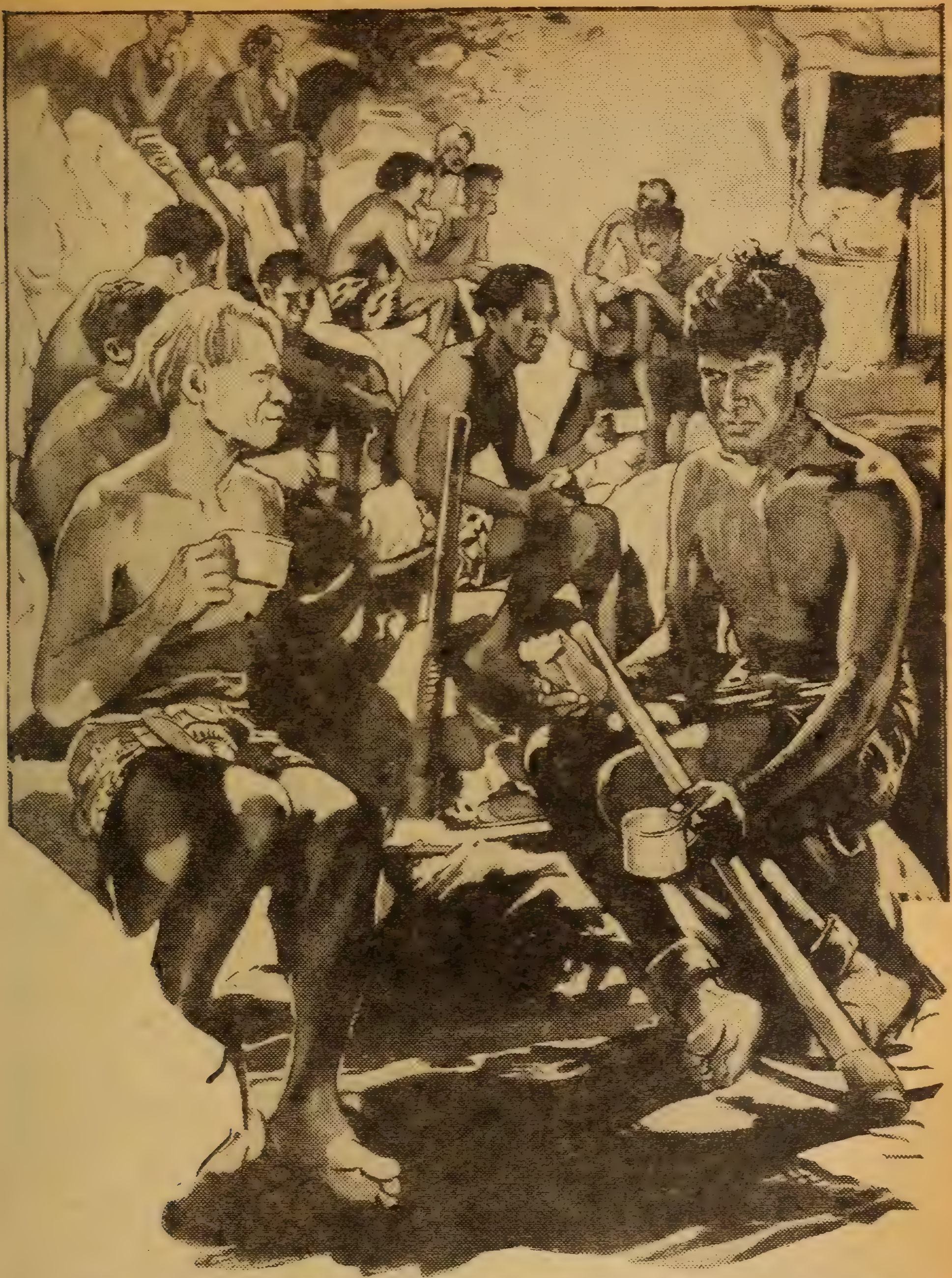
Those five months had transformed Mala from a laughing, care-free, childlike soul into a sullen, work-weary savage —but they had not broken his spirit.

Outwardly, Mala was a part of that cruel machine called the Oceanic Phosphate Company, whose labor recruits were "blackbirded" by unscrupulous shipmasters throughout the South Seas into twelve months of unspeakable slavery in the phosphate pits—if they were tough enough and lucky enough to last that long!

Inwardly, Mala was kept alive and apart from his coughing, dying, sun-mad comrades by the unquenchable flame of his intense love for Lilleo.

As he slaved in the pits, as he gulped down the coarse and meager food, as he spread his pandanus mat in the common sleeping shed—Lilleo, his woman, was always in his thoughts.

How keenly he remembered that sweet



After five months of burning hell, the chains were still upon Mala's ankles.

day of Lilleo's surrender—the day the ship had come! There had been a long and joyous party on the decks, with liberal rum punch served to the happy islanders, and the Chief closeted in a cabin with the bearded ruffian who was master of the ship.

Mala could not guess that the wily

Chief had betrayed him to the blackbirder. He could not guess that Lilleo, heartbroken and disconsolate, now sat with the three other women in the house of the Chief——

Mala knew only that the world had been a paradise that day, with Lilleo beside him on the ship. The white men had promised him a gleaming necklace for Lilleo's throat, a bracelet for her slender wrist, and a marvelous musical cage with two tiny love birds inside it—if only he would make his mark upon a piece of paper.

At nightfall, bewildered a little by the ship's rum and wearied by long gayety and dancing, Mala and Lilleo had fallen asleep, hand in hand like two trustful children, upon a great coil of hemp near the ship's bulwark. And it was then that the Chief, aided by the ship's crew, had taken Lilleo away from Mala. Mala, sunk in groggy sleep, had not heard her piteous cries——

Mala awoke next morning to find himself a prisoner, with half a dozen others, in the reeking hold of the ship—and the craft was far at sea! On deck, he learned that the paper he had marked was a white man's contract binding him to twelve months of labor on Patua.

He begged and pleaded to be allowed to go back to Tofoa after Lilleo, to bring her with him to Patua. The white ruffian laughed at him. Desperate, he tried to launch the ship's small boat. The crew set upon him. He fought with fury, knocked two or three of them senseless, before another beat him down with a belaying pin——

In chains, like a mad dog, the bearded ruffian delivered Mala to the Company at Patua, with the advice that they keep the leg chains on him for a spell.

NOW, after five months of burning hell—five treasured notches filed in the blistering handle of his heavy pick—the chains were still upon Mala's ankles.

He had worked hard and faithfully, given the overseers no trouble, but no one had bothered to remove his chains.

The iron links clanked dolefully as he pushed the heavy ore car along the track leading, by way of a shadowy tunnel, into the face of the hill. Mala was in the lead, behind him were other cars pushed by weary-shouldered natives. A white overseer brought up the rear of the procession.

At length Mala stopped his car. He was deep in the tunnel, but not quite at its end. This was the spot allotted him, in which to dig a carful of the white ore. He took his pick from the car and began the weary job.

Soon there came the rumble of a distant explosion in some remote part of the quarry. Around him, the heavily timbered tunnel shook, but Mala paid no heed. At first, these blasts had frightened him; but now he accepted them as part of the day's work.

The overseer came down alongside the row of ore cars, inspecting the progress of the work. Finally he reached Mala, and beckoned him to follow. The overseer led the way almost to the extreme end of the tunnel. Here he indicated to Mala a new section, blocked out for him to begin working.

As Mala started back after his ore car, there came the roaring rumble of a second blast, much closer than the first. And hard upon it, a warning cry cut back from the mouth of the tunnel!

Mala saw the men ahead of him drop their picks and run for the tunnel's mouth. He realized there was something amiss. Quick panic seized him. He followed the others, as swiftly as his chains permitted.

Behind him, the overseer yelled commandingly in Polynesian, told the workers that the blast should not concern them. Mala halted uncertainly, glanced back. But his primitive ears heard things the white man could not; they were filled with the ominous crack of supporting timbers!

Too late, the overseer realized his mistake! Thoroughly alarmed, he sped toward Mala and the safety of open spaces! But, with a snapping crash, a huge supporting timber gave way. It caught the recoiling white man, knocked him flat, pinioned his legs beneath its crushing weight. A following avalanche of debris buried him to his waist.

Without thought of his own safety, Mala sped back toward the prisoned white man. He was no longer a boss to be hated and feared. He was a human being in distress.

Their furious digging had saved the entombed men.

Desperately, Mala tugged at the fallen timber, strove to release the prisoned man. Great beads of sweat stood out on Mala's brow. An inch the timber gave, and another—and then, with a tremendous roar, the timbers behind him caved in!

The two were sealed in a tomb of phosphate and coral, filled with an impenetrable fog of choking dust.

Frantically, blindly, Mala threw all his splendid strength into a despairing effort to lift the timber from his fellow prisoner. A shower of debris rained down upon him; and with it came a blow that drove him flat—drove him deep down into a black void of insensibility——

VERY slowly, Mala came back to consciousness. He was lying on a pandanus mat near the mouth of the tunnel. A white doctor was bending over him, putting the finishing touches to a bandage on his arm. His head felt queer. His free hand discovered bandages upon his brow.

Nearby, he saw the overseer lying on a mat. A man was giving him water from a mug—the Commandant of the Company. A company clerk was with him. The Commandant was talking with the overseer. Mala couldn't understand their white man's tongue. He saw the injured overseer nod in his direction. Then the Commandant asked many questions of his clerk.

In the background were many tired natives, leaning wearily on picks and shovels, yet grinning contentedly because their furious digging had saved the entombed men.

Shortly the Commandant came over to Mala.

"Good work, Mala," he said approvingly, in Mala's own native tongue. "My overseer tells me you risked your own life in an effort to save his. We can't forget things like that, Mala."

"My clerk says you come from Tofoa. He says they put that chain on aboard the schooner, because you tried to fight your way back to your woman. Is that true?"

Mala nodded. And the Commandant went on:

"That chain is coming off your ankles, Mala. I am going to give you a hut of your own, and have one of our ships call at Tofoa and bring your woman here to you. How would you like that?"

Mala's heart leaped. Lilleo, here with him! For a moment he thought the White Chief might be fooling. But there was nothing but honesty in the Commandant's eyes. Behind him the other white men were smiling sympathetically—even the gathered overseers.

This was something Mala had never dreamed of. All in a breath, those past five months of heartbroken toiling were as nothing. His countenance, which had not known a smile since the moment of his awakening in the hold of the blackbirder, broke into a happy grin. The grin gave way to sudden joyous laughter.

By the magic of a few words from the lips of a white man, Mala was his old self once again!

THE schooner *Belle de Papeete* lay berthed alongside the jetty at Patua.

At the orders of the Commandant, she had called at Tofoa, to pick up Lilleo and bring her to Mala. But the ship's captain, when he learned that Lilleo was the Chief's number one woman, had refused to take her aboard. He feared so doing would make trouble for the Company.

Nevertheless, Lilleo had come to Patua aboard the *Belle de Papeete*—not as a passenger, but as a stowaway. She hadn't been discovered, until the ship was too far at sea to turn back.

It was the annoyed captain's intent to drop her at Tofoa on the return trip. Before docking at Patua, he had locked her securely in a cabin.

She had escaped by way of a skylight, dropped unnoticed over the stern, and swum ashore under the jetty.

Lilleo knew that sooner or later her

absence would be discovered. But she cared nothing for that. Her one thought was to find her man—her Mala!

She found him at work in the quarries. And the overseer had given him the rest of the morning off, so that he might take her to the hut where they were to live——

In the hut of Mala, newly thatched and scrupulously clean, dwelt the spirit of renewed happiness and romance.

Mala lay outstretched upon the floor, his head near Lilleo, completely on his back, as befitted a great warrior and husband. Lilleo's deft fingers had begun to weave a pandanus sleeping mat.

"Lilleo makes a sleeping mat for her man," she said proudly.

Mala laughed happily. "That will take a long time—ten moons!"

Lilleo shrugged. "We have many moons together."

"Yes! Many moons!"

Lilleo put down her work. A quick shadow of apprehension passed across her face.

"But the White Chief—they will find me gone and they will tell him why they locked me in the cabin. Will the White Chief let Lilleo stay here?"

Mala took her hand. "The White Chief has promised Mala. The White Chief is Mala's friend."

Lilleo, reassured, sighed happily. And demurely said:

"Mala is a good man."

Mala grinned. "It is good to hear his woman say that." And then he broke into joyous song: "I am a great hunter. I am a great fighter. I am the strongest of men. I am——"

He broke the song short. The face of the overseer, backed by half a dozen grinning laborers, had darkened the open window of the hut.

"Come, Mala—work!" said the overseer good-naturedly. "You come back to your woman tonight."

"A new land! . . . Mala Lilleo's man. Lilleo Mala's woman. There we make our home!"

MALA fell into the moving line of laborers returning to the quarry for the afternoon's work. His lusty voice joined in with the marching song. It was good to be alive, feel every fiber near bursting with happiness. His woman was with him now, and in a hut of their own—and never again would they be parted! The heavy pick was like a feather on his sturdy shoulder. He felt as strong as twenty men!

The moving procession met and passed two men, headed toward the little compound where stood the hut of Mala. One was a gendarme; the other was the captain of the *Belle de Papeete*. Their passing interested no one, least of all Mala. His heart, his mind, were too full of other concerns. For Mala, there was no more of evil in the world.

Even the sky, piling up with ominous black clouds, wiping out the sun as the afternoon wore away, could not shadow Mala's happiness. The rising wind foretokened a tremendous blow, perhaps a hurricane. But what of it! A snug hut and his own woman in his arms through the black night—Mala could want no more.

The wind increased in violence. It began to lift the white phosphate dust in swirling, choking clouds.

Mala glanced at the overseer. The white man had a scarf over his nose and mouth. Even so, he was coughing violently. He yanked the scarf away, wiped his eyes and face. And then he blew a sharp blast on his whistle.

It was the signal to quit work. The laborers made a rush for the road at the top of the quarry, fell into hasty formation. Their marching song rose above the shrieking of the wind. Mala's voice was louder and more joyous than all the rest.

At the earliest possible moment, Mala fell out of the line and sped for his hut. With Lilleo's name upon his lips, he lifted the swaying tapa door cloth and slipped inside. And there he paused, dismayed.

In the hut's darkening interior, there was no sign of Lilleo!

He called her name, anxiously. No answer. He thought perhaps she might be playing a joke on him, might be hiding somewhere nearby.

He hurried outside, calling her name over and over in the howling wind. Still there was no answer!

Perhaps she was hiding behind the hut. He leaped around the corner to surprise her. She was not there. On tiptoe he advanced to the other corner, peered cautiously around it. No sign of Lilleo.

Bewildered, Mala hastened back and forth. He scratched his head, a pantomime to let her know, if she were watching, that she had him mystified. Then it occurred to him, that she might be hiding behind a nearby tree. He dashed that way, and found emptiness.

For the first time, misgiving smote hard upon Mala. Perhaps this might not be a joke, after all! His voice lifted in a shout:

"Lilleo! Lilleo!"

The shrieking gale was his only answer. Panic took Mala. He dashed back into the hut, frantically calling the name of his mate. A sudden flash of lightning, ripping down from ragged black sky, showed him only an empty dwelling with walls quivering in the high wind.

A sudden thought ripped through the chaos in Mala's brain—that gendarme who passed on the road, and the captain of the ship!

Mala waited for no more. Through a world gone black and mad with wind and lightning and the moaning of tortured palm trees, he sped for the settlement and the office of the Commandant!

THE Commandant's face betrayed his sympathy, but his voice was gravely stern.

"Your woman is on the ship, Mala. She must go back to Tofoa. She is your Chief's number one woman, and we can do nothing about it—he would make trouble for the Company. I am sorry, Mala, but it must be. Remember that and cause us no trouble, or it will be the worse for you. Understand?"

Mala nodded dumbly. He was not even belligerent. He was a beaten man

—beaten by the bewildering code of these white men.

"Take him back to the labor camp," the Commandant ordered the gendarme, shouting to be heard over the fury of the storm. "And you'd better tell the overseer to keep an eye on him, until the storm blows over and the schooner can sail."

The gendarme nodded his understanding, and took Mala by the arm. Obediently, apparently completely submissive, Mala accompanied him to the door. They went out in the face of a terrific gust of wind.

As they pushed and fought their way toward the labor camp, Mala was hardly aware of the chaos about him—bent palm trees whipping the ground, a flock of hens whisked across the path, the thatched roof of a hut sailing away on the wind, an uprooted tree smashing another hut to kindling. Mala's brain was in chaos.

At the camp, he had no chance for clear thinking. His splendid strength was needed here. The roof of the sleeping shed was in danger of going. A frantic overseer was driving natives at the job of sand-bagging the roof, to hold it down. Mechanically, Mala tossed and heaved the heavy bags of earth to the roof gang.

Out of the corner of his eye, Mala saw an excited white man run up to the overseer, shout something at his ear. The overseer wheeled, shouted in Polynesian:

"Drop everything, boys! The supply shed roof is going!"

Mala was among the forefront of the men speeding toward the supply shed. To reach it, they had to pass Mala's own hut. He saw that a corner of the structure had sagged, that the entire building was in danger of being carried away.

Unnoticed, Mala fell out and ran to the hut. His only thought was to save this one last reminder of Lilleo from the fury of the storm.

Pitiful effort! All his magnificent strength was of no avail. The roof went whirling away in a black void. And a moment later the walls of the structure collapsed around him.

Wearily he dragged himself out of the wreckage. His home was gone. Lilleo was gone. There was nothing left of dreams and happiness——

Standing there alone under the lash of the raging storm, Mala had a moment for clear thinking. Lilleo! Lilleo, locked in a cabin on the ship! She might be in danger!

Swiftly he wheeled; and blindly, looking neither to the left or right, he sped toward the shore!

A LURID flash of lightning revealed the jetty. Tremendous waves were beating savagely against it. On the lee side, the *Belle de Papeete* was riding heavily.

With his breath sobbing in his throat and the crash of riven trees almost at his flying heels, Mala gained the jetty head.

It seemed as if all the forces of nature were gathered to block him in his efforts to reach his woman. A tremendous sea smashed against the jetty, ripped short sections cleanly away, and broke riotously across the schooner's deck.

Mala never hesitated. Straight onward he plunged. Bunched sinews drove him leaping across the void of missing jetty sections. He neared the schooner. She was pounding like a battering ram against the jetty. Intermittent flashes of lightning revealed no sign of anyone aboard her.

With a tremendous leap, Mala gained the deck of the heaving schooner. A surging sea nearly carried him across the far rail. He fought his way toward the scuttle—gained it—descended to the passageway.

The heaving of the ship smashed him against the walls of the passageway, first on one side, then on the other. He brought up thumping against a door. He heard pounding on the other side of the panels. He wrenched at the door. It was locked securely.

"Lilleo!" he yelled. "Lilleo!"

Faintly her voice answered: "Mala! Mala!"

He battered furiously against the door. It did not yield. Desperately he shouldered against it. It still held. He drew back, hunched his shoulders, threw every ounce of his strength in a battering drive against the panels. The lock gave way with a sharp snap. He went headlong, halfway across the cabin.

The place was a chaos of jumbled furniture and bed clothing, lit by a wildly swinging oil lamp. Dancing shadows played across Lilleo's terrified face.

There was no time for greetings. Already the pounding seas had smashed a porthole, caved in several of the ship's ribs. The cabin floor was knee deep with writhing, foaming water.

Mala seized Lilleo by the wrist, dragged her into the sluicing passageway and up the short stairs to the deck.

The wind shrieked fiendishly. In thick blackness, they cowered for a moment in the lee of the scuttle. A sizzling flash of lightning ripped the black sky wide open.

Lilleo screamed. Mala's eyes retained a brief clear picture of the schooner's mainmast toppling toward them. He hurled Lilleo aside and leaped after her not a breath too soon. Behind them, the crashing mast smashed the framework of the scuttle into kindling wood!

WITH this temporary shelter gone, Mala huddled in the waist of the ship, holding Lilleo close—a man protecting his mate from the fury of the elements. He knew they could not remain much longer on the ship. The drive of wind and seas was fast breaking her up against the half demolished jetty.

Out of the blackness a tremendous sea came roaring across the ship's bulwark. Mala felt himself going in its relentless grip. Desperately he held fast to Lilleo.

The drive of the big wave took them clean off the schooner, swept them across the top of the jetty. By sheer good luck Mala managed to wrap an arm around a mooring piling; he held on like grim death, until the wave subsided.

Gasping, choking, he got to his feet, dragged Lilleo with him. He started shoreward along the jetty. Lightning revealed them just upon the brink of a wide ragged break in the pier. A reaching stretch of raging water lay between them and the shore. Under their feet, the jetty was swaying precariously.

Mala swung over to the leeward side. And suddenly his heart leaped with fierce hope. Lightning had revealed to him a small cutter, plunging at the end of a mooring line and no more than a hundred yards distant from the jetty.

Mala bent his mouth close to Lilleo's ear, shouted his discovery. Her grip on his arm tightened. She nodded against his head. She was willing to risk anything with this man of her choice.

Hand in hand they left the jetty, took to the boiling sea in a leaping plunge.

And side by side, Mala and his woman fought their way to the plunging cutter and climbed aboard.

With a rope's end, Mala lashed Lilleo safely to a ring bolt. Then he slipped the mooring and clambered aft to the tiller.

On the crest of a lifting wave, the driving offshore wind spun the released cutter like a chip—drove her onward like a thing alive, through slashing spume—straight out toward the freedom of the dark wild sea——

THE sun rose with golden splendor on a new day.

The cutter, half wrecked from the buffetings of the storm, drifted idly on the long slow swells of a quiet sea.

Lilleo was asleep on the bottom boards. Mala, too, was asleep, with his arm about the tiller. Not quite asleep, but dozing.

He opened his eyes. For a moment his gaze rested fondly upon Lilleo. Then he glanced forward, across the cutter's bow. His heart gave a great leap of gladness. Swiftly he came erect.

Far off across the bow, lay a perfect gem of tropical island. A line of creaming foam marked the barrier reef to a lagoon. Tall cocoanut palms were etched against the soft blue sky. A strip of flawless sand beach gleamed its welcome in the morning sun.

Mala wanted to shout with joy. Instead, in a spirit of incurable mischief, he awakened Lilleo by dipping his hand in the sea and trickling drops of water on her upturned face.

She opened her eyes with a start, saw his smiling face close to hers. She smiled back. Then he lifted her to her feet, pointed to the land ahead.

"A new land!" he cried joyously. "There we make our home!"

"Yes!" said Lilleo softly. "Mala Lilleo's man. Lilleo Mala's woman. There we make our home!"

Gently, with the unquenchable spirit of a steadfast love aboard her, the valiant little cutter drifted onward toward the shore——

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 47

MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, with Clark Gable, Charles Laughton, Franchot Tone, Herbert Mundin, Eddie Quillan, and Dudley Digges.

The sea—the stern, relentless pounding sea—has left its mark on MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY, as surely as it has affected those who are responsible for its being one of the outstanding pictures of the year—Messrs. Nordhoff and Hall who wrote the book, Frank Lloyd who directed the film, and Gable, Laughton and Tone who star. The brutal and real story of service under the inhuman captaincy of Charles Laughton—a voyage into Southern Seas—a revolt against the cruelest of tyranny—the attempts of the sailors to dedicate their new-found freedom in establishing a new colony—these things are translated from history and put down in moving and dramatic fashion to thrill you. And thrill you they will!

IT IS ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE THAT SO MUCH AND SO REAL A STORY HAS BEEN PUT IN ONE PICTURE. A TRULY GREAT FILM.

BARBARY COAST

A United Artists picture, with Miriam Hopkins, Edward G. Robinson, Joel McCrea, and Walter Brennan.

Here is San Francisco in its most notorious days, with vice and gambling, murder and violence pointing the way for the plot. Authentic and thrilling, this is one of the best original stories ever to come to the screen. The performances—even down to the smallest bit parts—are top notch. Especially good, among the secondary characterizations, are Walter Brennan as "Old Atrocity," Frank Craven, Andy Clyde and Harry Carey.

A GREAT MOVIE, EQUAL IN EVERY WAY TO THE BRILLIANT STARS WHICH HEAD THE CAST.

Continued on page 109

HEIR TO TROUBLE

His best pal died and saddled him with a one man battle against a whole town, led by a crooked politician!

THE Sicoma City Marshal stepped off the scales hopelessly.

"Five more pounds," he announced sadly to his deputies who were sprawled lazily on the sun-baked street. "The West isn't bad enough any more to keep yore weight down even."

But a lot he knew! Before he could even sit down again two good old-fashioned shots tore the ground under his pine bench. A woman screamed. The saloon across the street roared into a riot. Its doors burst open and a tall, lean cowboy dashing out, six-gun in hand, fired a second salute at the startled Marshal. Then making a flying leap for his horse he went dashing up the street shooting left and right into the air.

"Ken Armstrong is loose again," cried the Marshal running for his horse. "Come on, you loafers! Let's git him this time."

"Not while he's riding Tarzan, we can't," one of his men shouted back, but his words were lost in the roar of pounding hoofs. The Law was after Ken Armstrong!

Two hours later the Marshal and his posse were still riding after Ken or at least they hoped they were. They had lost sight of him half an hour before.

"I'll bet he was headed for the Bar X ranch," the Marshal said. "I'm gitting him this time if it's the last thing I do."

At the Bar X ranch Ken burst into the bunk house. His pal, Hank, saw him first.

"Boys," he cried, "the bad man's come home!"

The lolling cowboys crowded around.

"Did you get away with it?" asked Hank.

"Reckon I did," said Ken with a broad smile.

A sad cowboy dug deep into his pocket and brought out a crumpled ten spot.

"Here you are, Ken," he drawled regretfully. "You win the bet for riling up that stuffed shirt."

"Thanks, 'Spurs,' though I reckon I shouldn't take it. Playing bad man was fun enough."

Hank, who was nearest the window, saw the Marshal's posse coming up the road.

"Look out! The ole moss back's comin' in!" he called out.

Ken jumped into one of the lower bunks and flung the blankets over himself.

"Some of you strike up a little music. The rest of you act natural—you know, dumb like. And remember—you ain't seen me," he said.

THE Marshal threw the door wide open and strode in with his men.

The cowboys stopped their music and glanced up casually. "Howdy, Marshal," they said. "How be yuh, Jake. Come on in out of the sun, Luke——"

But the Marshal wasn't in the mood for small talk. "Where's Ken?" he roared.

A few of the men struck up their guitars again.

"I'm askin' yuh—where's Ken?" the Marshal blustered.

"Why, Marshal, don't you know?" asked Hank innocently.

"If I did I'd have him in the lock-up, dad-burn his ornery hide."

"In the lock-up?" cried Hank incredulously. "Say, what's he done—murder?"

"He's disrupted the peace and quiet of Sicoma City and he's due fer thirty days in the cooler and fifty bucks fine the minnit I get my hands on him."

"That's a mighty serious charge," admitted Hank, winking to the boys. "But yuh bein' nothin' but a town Marshal, how come yuh to chase a man outside the jurisdiction of yore office?"

The Marshal spluttered desperately for an explanation. He turned on his heel. "C'mon, boys," he said to his men, striding out.

But at the door he wheeled and faced the laughing cowboys. "Just the same

Making a flying leap for his horse, he went dashing up the street shooting right and left!

THE CAST

KEN MAYNARD	Ken Armstrong
JOAN PERRY	Jane Parker
Harry Woods	John Motley
Harry Bowen	Hank

Directed by Spencer Gordon Bennett
Story by Ken Maynard
Screenplay by Nate Gatzert

The complete story of the Columbia Picture of the same title.

the first time that maverick shows his face in Sicoma City, in the jug he goes! Laugh that off, you coyotes!" he said, slamming the door.

Hank jumped from the bunk.

"Boy, was he burnt up!"

"Yeah, but you heered what he said," Spurs reminded him. "He'll pick yuh up whenever yuh hit town again. So how're you gonna see Jane tonight before she leaves to visit her aunt?"

"Ten will get you twenty that I do—and without the Marshal laying a hand on me either," Hank boasted.

"Yore on, pardner," said Spurs.

KEN was marrying Jane in two weeks and she was going to the big city that night to buy her wedding clothes. A herd of stampeding horses couldn't have kept him away, let alone a Marshal. Not that the Marshal broke in on them while they sat in Jane's parlor that night. But Jane's father who came home late from the post office brought Ken enough extra trouble to make up for the Law's absence.

"Here's a letter for you," he said as he started the buckboard with Jane in it for the station.

Ken took it absently, waving goodby to Jane until they were out of sight. Then, still happy, he ripped the envelope open. A scribbled note was attached to a legal document. He knew instinctively it was bad news. The note said:

> Friend Ken: It's been a heap of years since we seen each other and now I'm cashing in. I've got one last request to make of you. Take care of my son, Dick, and raise him up a man. Good-bye, Ken, and thanks.
>
> Your old partner,
>
> Jack Swift.

And the legal-looking letter attached to it read:

> Dear Sir: Mr. Jack Swift, deceased, has instructed us to send his son to you, subject to certain terms and conditions set forth in his will. He will arrive in Sicoma City by train the evening of the twentieth at 9:20 P. M. We are sending the above mentioned terms and conditions to our legal representative in your city immediately.

KEN was sitting surrounded by his friends in the Bar X bunk house once more. A stunned silence had settled over the group—as eloquent an obituary as those rough-and-tumble, gold-hearted cowhands could offer to the memory of a departed friend.

For a long time, no one spoke. Then, finally, Hank broke the silence.

"What are you gonna do when he gets here?" he asked. "You gonna keep on with your mine, or will you be coming back here as foreman of Bar X again?"

"I've been trying to think that out myself," Ken answered slowly. "I've got to have a future now more than ever. I reckon I'll have to keep on trying to get gold out of my mine."

"Minin' is a pretty tough job for one man," Spurs put in. "I'm mighty glad yore gettin' someone that can help you out."

"Yes, there's some good in this ill wind," Ken sagely agreed. "I guess I'll go up to the shack tomorrow and fix it up before Dick gets here."

But trouble in the shape of three men was waiting for Ken at the mine when he rode up the next morning.

There was "Honest" John Motley, a big man in money and Sicoma politics, as well as physically. Dwyer, his mining engineer, and Ike, his bodyguard, completed the trio.

"Ah, good morning, Ken," said Motley. "We was just talking about you."

"That so?" said Ken, noncommittally.

"Dwyer says he offered you ten thousand for this mine," the big man continued. "That's a heap of money—a lot more than this hole in the ground is worth."

"What are you driving at, Motley?" Ken snapped.

Honest John Motley looked hurt.

"As long as Dwyer made you such an exorbitant offer on my behalf," he explained, "I'm duty bound to stand back of him. You ready to close, now?"

"Nope. My ore assays too high. I'll hang on."

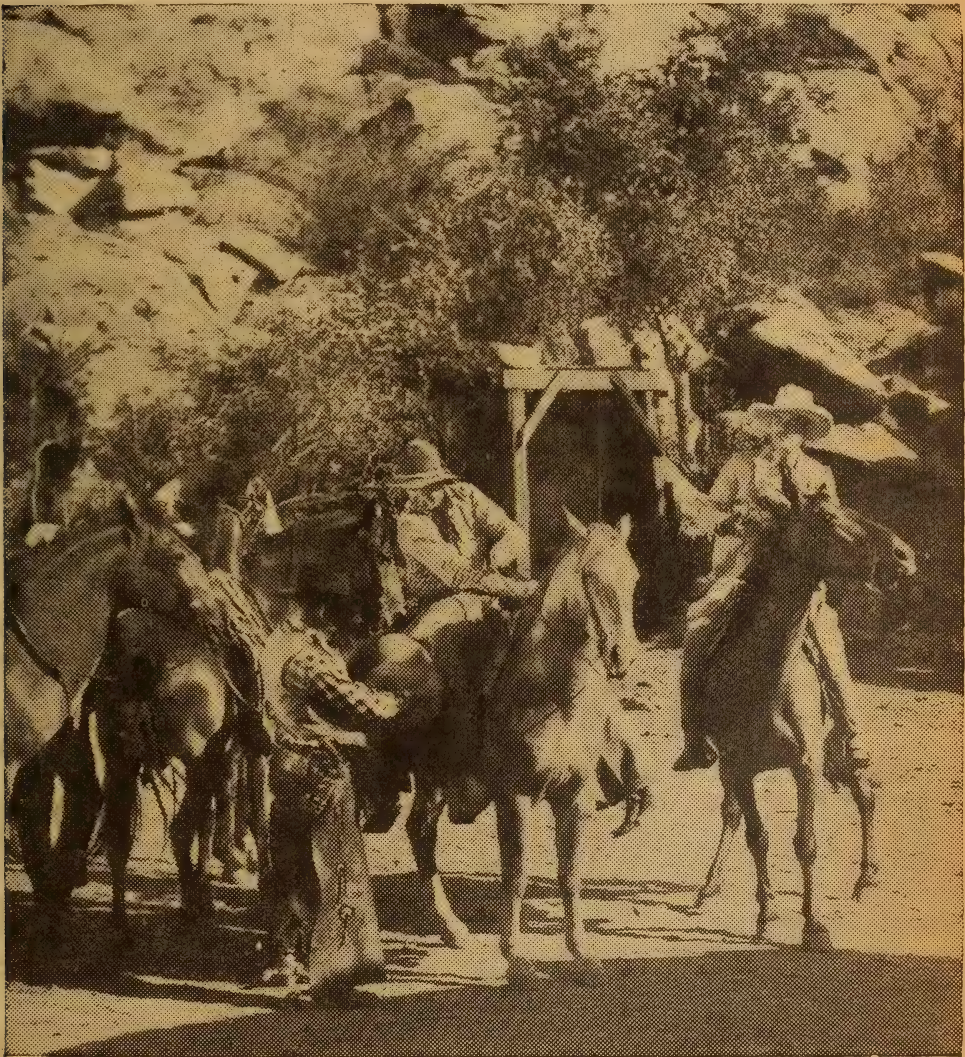
He started for the mine, but Motley stopped him.

"Name your own figure then. Maybe we can get together."

Ken turned. "Why are you so anxious to get my claim? You've got plenty of mining property without this strip."

Motley's gesture of impatience inferred that he had decided to lay his cards on the table.

"Because your mine divides my holdin's. It'll cost a lot to stop at one side of your line and pick up at the other," he explained. "Even if there ain't an ounce of gold in your mine, it's still



Trouble in the shape of three men was waiting for Ken at the mine.

worth money to me. Now what's your price?"

Ken shook his head. "There's gold there," he said. "Gold aplenty. The assay shows a fortune—large enough to keep me in comfort for life, and I don't intend to pass it up."

Motley's temper broke. "You're trying to run a hold-up on me——" he began hotly.

Ken stepped close, edging his hand toward his gun. "Wait a minute, there," he said quietly. "I'm not in the hold-up business, or in the habit of bluffin'. I can't be bulldozed into sellin' my mine for one cent on the dollar, either!"

"You're a fool not to close with me. You'll never get anywhere workin' this claim alone."

"I'm not figurin' on workin' alone," Ken smiled. "I've taken in a partner from back East. He's arrivin' tomorrow."

Motley swung angrily up on his horse. "C'mon," he called to his men. "We've wasted too much time already."

As soon as they were out of earshot Motley turned to Dwyer. "I want you to rush our tunnels right through his mine. I'll show that cow-poke he can't put anything over on Honest John Motley."

The engineer protested. "But there's a law against——"

"You're a good minin' man, but you'll never be a politician," Motley interrupted. "Suppose you keep to minin' and let me handle the law."

KEN hoped the station would be deserted when he went down to welcome Dick Swift the next night but unfortunately it turned out to be an important occasion. A baggage truckload of express was going out.

"If we could always have big shipments like this," the station master was telling the Marshal as Ken unsuspectingly walked onto the platform, "Sicoma City'd be a mighty important railroad center."

Ken drew back into the shadows.

The Marshal nodded solemnly. "You betcha. That's why I figgered my presence here was necessary. Don't want any hold-ups tonight."

The train roared into the station and puffed to a stop. Nobody got off, however. Ken cautiously stole along the train, peering into the coaches. As he came to one door an Irish woman's voice called to him. "Hey, are you Mr. Armstrong?"

Ken turned and looked up at the biggest woman he ever saw outside of a circus.

"Yes, ma'am," he said, "but what——"

She put a small white package in his arms. "Here ye be, thin. The pore little spalpeen——"

Ken looked twice. The bundle in his arms was a baby.

"But—but—I was expectin' a young man——" He looked up bewildered.

"Shure, 'tis a young man," the woman broke in, "Master Dick Swift hisself, the pore little orphant. Mither an' father both dead, the good Lord rest their souls! You wait. I'll git his clo'es an' things from the train."

The bewildered cowboy stood there lost to the world. But he was mighty conspicuous.

"Marshal!" cried the station master. "There's Ken Armstrong at the far end of the platform!"

The Marshal jumped into action. "Halt!" he cried. "In the name of the law, halt!"

Ken suddenly came to life. He whistled for Tarzan and started running in the direction of the horse.

"Wait—the baby's clo'es——" cried Bridget, coming from the train. But Ken and the baby were already flying away on Tarzan's back.

Ken knew that, under ordinary circumstances, his horse could outdistance the Marshal's. However, he found riding with a baby in his arms was a far different matter than simply bending low over Tarzan's neck and giving him free rein.

A flying unity, they hurled themselves around the first turn which, temporarily hid them from their pursuer. As they did, Ken felt his burden slip in his arms. He made a quick grab at the blanketed bundle, saving the baby from a fall, but jerking on the reins so that Tarzan brought up short.

With a whoop and a holler, the Marshal rounded the turn at their heels! Ken dug his spurs deep into Tarzan's flanks. The startled mount leaped away again. The next few hundred yards, Ken realized that he was no longer gaining on the Marshal—that having to hold the infant and Tarzan's reins at the same time was keeping the horse's head high and preventing him from running at top speed.

Finally, casting all care to the winds, Ken dropped the straps just as the Marshal was drawing abreast of him to force him off the road. Gripping his saddle tightly with his knees, holding tiny Dick Swift close to him, Ken Armstrong leaned close to Tarzan's head.

"Come on, you white cyclone!" he shouted into the terrified horse's ear. "Come on! Come on!"

Thundering hoofs picked up a new, a faster rhythm. Faint and fainter grew the angry shouts of the pursuing Marshal. And then, crossing the crest of a low hill, Ken reached for the dangling leather and pulled gently.

"All right, old boy," he said. "Take it easy now. We're past Sicoma City limits——"

HANK and Spurs came over early the next morning and found Ken milking one of the wild goats he had managed to catch.

"Mornin'," said Hank. "just thought we'd bust over and welcome the tenderfoot to the West."

The ringing of the cow bell interrupted him at his work in the mine. Tarzan was announcing visitors.

Ken was alarmed. "Uh—— Nice of you," he stammered, "but can't you make it some other time—after he gets used to our ways?"

"Nope," Hank was stubborn. "'Twouldn't be neighborly."

"Where is he?" Spurs asked. "Down working the mine?"

Ken gave up. "You might as well know now as later. C'mon."

Ken led them in to where the baby was lying on his huge bunk.

"Gee!" said Hank.

"Gosh!" exclaimed Spurs.

"Cute, ain't he?" asked Ken.

The men stared at Ken at a loss for words.

"I'm figurin' on you boys helpin' me out," Ken announced.

"Huh?" Hank asked uneasily. "How?"

"I need a whole outfit for him," Ken said. "Clothes, nursin' bottles, and—uh—everything. An' it's up to you to go to town an' get 'em for me."

Hank and Spurs threw up their hands.

"Not me!" cried Hank. "I ain't goin' to be mixed up in no baby business."

"Me, neither," added Spurs. "Why—why it'd be scandalous—scandalous!"

"But, fellas," Ken pleaded, "*I* can't go. The Marshal'd get me sure."

The boys sympathized with him, but remained firm in their decision. Then Spurs got an idea.

"Queenie," he suggested. "Queenie up to the saloon. She'd help yuh. She's got a heart as big as a beer keg. Just tell her I sent yuh, that's all."

"Yuh could sneak in the back door of the saloon," Hank suggested.

"An' me an' Hank'll stay here and ride herd on the kid while you're gone," offered Spurs.

"A'right then, I'll get goin'," said Ken.

Ken reached the saloon without running into the Marshal and asked for Queenie.

"Ken Armstrong wantin' to see a dance-hall girl?" asked Queenie, amazed, when she was told who her visitor was.

"I've come to ask a favor," Ken explained a moment later. "I've acquired a baby—a tiny one. He ain't got any clothes."

"Most of them come that way," Queenie observed crisply.

"He's old Jack Swift's son—an orphan now——"

"Say, is this on the level?" Queenie interrupted.

Ken nodded eagerly. "Absolutely. An' Spurs said you'd be willin' to help me out. He an' Hank are ridin' herd on Dick till I get back."

"The poor little thing," Queenie softened. "What do you want me to do—buy some clothes for him?"

"Everythin'. Clothes, nursin' bottles, and—uh——"

"I know," Queenie saved him. "You stay here. I'll be back as soon as possible."

Ken sighed with relief. But he would not have been so relieved could he have heard what was going on in the law office of Uriah Potts only a few doors away.

"SO you see I've got to get hold of Ken Armstrong's claim," Honest John Motley was telling Potts, but Potts seemed to be more interested in a sheaf of legal papers on his desk. "Say, what's the matter with you?" Motley banged his fist on the desk. "Pay attention to what I'm sayin', Potts."

The weazened lawyer held up the papers to Motley.

"Armstrong has a bigger gold mine in these legal documents than all your holdings put together," he told him.

Motley leaned forward tensely.

"Whata you mean? What are they?"

"The last will and testament of one Jack Swift, deceased." The lawyer grinned meaningly. "It seems that the said Swift rounded up a pile of dough and an infant son. He asked that the child be sent to Ken Armstrong. That was done." He paused meaningly, then read again from the will—"and when Richard is legally adopted, his foster father shall become the sole administrator of the estate——"

"But ain't there a loop-hole—some way for us to cut in?" Motley interrupted.

"That's the loop-hole," Potts said. "While it specifically says that the baby be sent to Ken Armstrong, it says that his foster father shall become administrator. That doesn't necessarily mean Armstrong. It can be any man who legally adopts the boy."

"I get you!" cried Motley. "An' that man will be me. I'm goin' after the kid right now. You attend to the legal details!"

Potts stopped him. "Not so fast," he admonished. "We can't do this by kidnapping or force. Why don't you drop a hint to the Ladies' Aid Society that Ken Armstrong is not a fit person to have the child and let them start the ruckus? Then we'll get the Justice of the Peace to issue an order, and the child will be turned over to a proper person. Proper, meaning you," he added.

"But what about Ken? Can't he fight the case?"

"Sure!" Uriah Potts looked meaningly at Motley. "If he's around to do it!"

"I'll attend to that," Motley assured him.

KEN arose the next morning, happy and unsuspecting. He had spent the preceding evening training Tarzan to be a nurse; now he put him through a final review before leaving for the mine.

"C'mon, now," he called, "what do you do if the baby cries?"

Tarzan put his foot on a board nailed to the cradle and began rocking it.

"Good. Now, when he's hungry?"

The horse took a rope in his teeth from which a bottle was suspended and lowered it to the baby's mouth.

Ken patted him proudly. "Right. And if you need me?"

Tarzan went over to a cow bell near the door of his shack and pulled on the rope.

Ken nodded approvingly and went out with a free heart.

It was almost noon when the ringing

"Before I get through with you," he raged, "you'll wish you'd never been born!"

There was a cyclone of flying hoofs as the men

of the cow bell interrupted him at his work in the mine. Tarzan was announcing visitors.

Ken came rushing up, to see Jane and Motley leaving his shack and heading toward Motley's waiting rig.

"Jane, honey," he cried, taking her arms in his wild joy at seeing her. "When did you get back? I didn't expect you!"

"Apparently not," she interrupted coldly, "judging from that child——"

"Child?" Ken laughed. "Why, I can explain about him."

"There's no need to. I know all about it. The whole town knows all about you and that—that Queenie woman! Now let me go!" She struggled to free herself.

Ken was so struck by the sudden turn of events that he was frozen to the spot, incapable of action. Motley grabbed him by the shoulder and swung him around so roughly that his hold on Jane was broken.

Seemingly unaware of Motley's action, Ken blurted out, "But Jane, you don't understand! I don't know what they've been sayin' around town, but I never spoke to Queenie in my life afore yesterday. This kid——"

"She don't want to hear no more lies,"

from Bar X came pounding onto the grounds.

Motley broke in suddenly. His words seemed to bring Ken back to consciousness.

"How come you to horn in on this, Motley?" he asked in menacing tones.

Motley cast a quick glance up the hill, above Ken's open mine. There, mounted on his wiry roan, waited his henchman, Ike. Steel flashed in the sunlight as Ike, gun in hand, signaled recognition to his boss.

Boldly, assured of help in the now inevitable fight, Motley sneered, "I'm here to protect Jane."

"She don't need protection!" Ken roared. "Get off my property!"

"You can't bluff me."

"Get off my property before I throw you off!"

Motley retreated a step. "Who do you think you're talking to?" he demanded.

With a sigh of relief that betrayed the fact that he had been waiting long and patiently for this moment, Ken grabbed the politician by his collar.

"You, you rat!" he exclaimed. He started to drag him toward the waiting rig.

MOTLEY swung wickedly at Ken's jaw. Being off balance, his swing missed, and glanced off the younger man's face harmlessly. Ken released his grip on his opponent's collar and stepped back, ready for action.

As Motley came in, Ken let loose a short, powerful jolt to his ribs and followed with another to his face. Making no effort to protect himself, Motley fought back viciously.

Soon the two men were rolling on the ground, gouging, driving crushing blows into each other.

Ike had ridden into the clearing, and was now standing on foot, his six-shooter ready to pump flaming lead into Ken as soon as there was no danger of hitting Motley.

Now, on his feet, Ken fought coolly, but Motley flailed away with such uncontrollable rage that the very fierceness of his attack broke through Ken's guard. He drove him back, pouring felling blows on him. Finally, his fist crashed flush onto Ken's jaw.

Ken's head snapped back. He staggered. Motley, instead of following through, stopped to reach for his gun. The fraction of a second's pause was all Ken needed to recover his balance.

With the force of an avalanche, he leaped forward and landed a terrific blow on Motley's jaw. Motley crumpled and fell to the ground, senseless.

As Ken bent over him, unsuspectingly, he made a perfect target for Ike. The gunman raised his gun with a satisfied smile.

Jane, who had been watching the brutal battle in terror, saw Ike take aim. She forgot her hate. "Ken, look out!" she cried.

Instinctively, but not knowing what danger threatened, Ken dropped to the ground, picking up Motley's gun as he fell. Ike's shot whistled harmlessly a full foot above him. Ken fired back and caught the gunman in the shoulder. He jumped to his feet and turned to go to Jane. The girl, however, had darted into the rig and was driving off.

He called to her but she did not look back.

Angrily he went back to Motley and dragged him to his feet. "If ever you mix in my affairs again it's goin' to be too bad for your future health. Now take your gunman an' get out!"

He shoved him toward Ike. Motley glared at his wounded bodyguard and kicked him viciously.

"Mount up, you bungler," he growled.

Ike climbed painfully to his horse's back, his face full of hatred for his boss who crawled up behind him. Together, they rode off.

FOR the rest of the day, Motley was a busy man. After the slow ride back to his mine with Ike as his groaning companion, Honest John slid down to the ground, trembling with rage.

"Dwyer!" he roared, and the mining man came running.

"What's the matter, boss?" he asked. "You look like there's been trouble."

Motley swore violently. "It's that Armstrong—I'm through playing around with him——"

"You'd better be," Ike's admonition came from behind him. "He licked you somethin'——"

Motley whirled and smashed Ike full in the face—a blow that earned him his henchman's eternal hatred!

"Get over to the bunk house, you yellow-bellied rat!" he shouted. Then, turning once more to Dwyer, "I want you to mine the South tunnel with dynamite, and wire it up to the plunger as fast as you can."

"The South tunnel?" Dwyer gasped. "Why, you can't do that, boss. You'll blow Armstrong's claim into Kingdom Come!"

"Who asked you what it would do? I'm still giving orders around here!" Motley dismissed him with a gesture. He strode to the bunk house and flung the door open.

"Come on, you!" he roared at the

group who looked up startled. "Get movin'!"

"Where we goin', Mr. Motley?" came a voice from the group.

"Goin'? We're goin' back to Armstrong's mine and see who's runnin' this neck of the woods—him or me?"

As they rode toward Ken's place, they came across another group headed in the same direction—a string of dusty wagons filled with righteous looking, stern faced women. Leading them was a rig riding the Justice of the Peace and Lawyer Potts.

Motley's evil heart leaped, for he knew that he and Potts had been able to swing the wives of Sicoma City against Ken's raising the child. Their plan was working!

With a wave of his hand to the leading carriage, Honest John Motley led his mauruding band sweeping on down the road.

THEIR arrival at Ken's place was announced in the usual manner by Tarzan who was grazing near the shack. Before Motley or any of the men could stop him, the unhaltered horse ran to the bell rope and worked it vigorously.

He ordered his men to get out of sight by hiding on either side of the mine entrance. Further orders were not necessary. Every man in Motley's party knew without being told what he was there for and what he would be expected to do!

Running footsteps sounded from inside the mine. Ken burst forth into the sunlight and stopped suddenly, dazed for the moment at not seeing the visitors whom Tarzan had announced. Then, swiftly, his arms were pinioned behind him, his guns taken away, and his wrists bound tightly. It all happened in such a short time that Ken hardly realized who his ambushers were.

Motley stepped before him, and Ken's brow clouded. He knew there was trouble ahead. But he little knew how much!

Bravely, he said, "All right, Motley. Now what?"

His coolness infuriated the older man. He whipped out one of his guns. "Before I get through with you," he raged, "you'll wish you'd never been born!"

He lashed out, crashing his heavy revolver barrel across Ken's temple. Wordlessly, the young cowboy slumped into an inert heap.

"Take him over to our place!" Motley barked. "Lock him in the tool shed. Keep him there till I get back."

As the party of desperados left, taking a back trail, no one noticed that they were followed—by a riderless white horse—Tarzan!

Motley remained alone at Ken's mine long enough to be there when the Justice, Potts, and the ladies arrived. Motley explained that he had stopped to see Ken on business, but that he was obviously not there.

Without formality, the Justice declared that the baby, who was left in the shack, could be taken away by Mrs. Dwyer—the wife of Motley's engineer—"until such time as they might dispose of the infant in some other way."

Everyone was satisfied and happy. Motley suggested that, since he was the nearest neighbor, Mrs. Dwyer should bring the baby to his place for its next meal. "Reckon we can rustle up some milk," he said.

And so it was settled. The entire caravan turned back towards Sicoma City again, and before long the stream of carriages was pulling into Honest John Motley's place.

AT the same time, half a dozen punchers were gathered around Hank in the Bar X bunk house. He was telling about having met Jane in town just a short time before.

"I saw she wasn't lookin' so good, so I asked her if she saw Ken's baby, an' right away I saw what she was thinkin'. 'Wait a minute,' I told her. 'It ain't really his—it's Jack Swift's, an' he just died and left it to Ken.' Well, I'm tellin' you *hombres*, I never saw a gal's face change so fast in my life! She smiled an' looked like she was gonna cry at the same time. Then she run and jumped into her rig, an' off she scooted, headin' for Ken's place."

"Reckon she was mad at Ken?" one of his listeners asked.

But Hank's answer was never to be made. There was a heavy scratching at the door. Spurs opened it, to find Tarzan standing there, a handkerchief in his teeth. On the white cloth, written with the lead from a bullet, was: "Held prisoner in tool shed at Motley mine. Come a-runnin'. Ken."

"I'll be dawgoned if this here white horse don't do everything but talk!" Spurs drawled, but he had no listeners. The men were scattering in all directions, saddling their ponies and buckling on their gun belts! A few seconds later, whooping a war cry that had not stirred Sicoma Valley for many years, the rescue party swept through the gates of the Bar X and down the road toward Motley's claim!

AT the mine, Motley was impatient. He had held Ken captive long enough to get Jack Swift's baby—and the baby's inheritance—away from him. He wanted to complete the blasting in the South tunnel quickly.

Dwyer was advising caution. He had planted the high explosive where it would do the most good. He was now wiring it up to the plunger which stood directly above the charge. But Motley, contemptuous of Dwyer's fears, stood over him while he worked.

A hundred yards away, in the bunk house, the good ladies of Sicoma City were preparing a meal for the young orphan.

Suddenly, there was a cyclone of flying hoofs as the men from Bar X came pounding onto the grounds. Motley whipped out his gun, ran for the bunk house, and shouted a warning to his band of gunfighters.

The newcomers were in the mood for such a reception. They dashed through the cleared space, and did not draw rein until they had reached the tool shed in which their ex-foreman and friend was held captive. Then, throwing themselves to the ground, they opened fire on Motley's startled men.

Cut off from their prisoner by this surprise attack, the desperados sought refuge wherever they could. Most of them took to the wooded hillside where the searing lead of the Bar X cowboys would not find them so easily.

While the other men laid down a death-dealing circle of gun-fire, Hank broke in the tool shed door and found Ken bound and gagged on the floor. A few deft motions and the young captive was free again.

"They've got the kid!" were his first words. "He's in the bunk house now! Motley told me!"

With concerted action, both men dove for the door. And there, frozen in their tracks, they stood and watched Motley running from the bunk house door. In one hand, he brandished a heavy revolver. The other held a tiny, squirming bundle of white close to his chest. And above the crackle of the gun-fire came the wailing of young Dick Swift as Motley ran with him to the dynamite plunger!

"Stop firing!" Ken screamed. Suddenly, there was silence.

Motley had gained his objective—the plunger wired to the death dealing charge below him.

"Get back! Get out of here!" came Motley's voice. "I've got all the dynamite in the world under this plunger."

"We'll stay until you surrender!" Ken shouted back.

Motley put the baby on the ground beside him and used his free hand for his second gun. "The kid goes if I do!" he answered. "Get off my place, an' the kid'll be all right."

There was a slight rustling of leaves near him. Motley turned suddenly, to see a white form coming towards him. That was the last thing he ever did. He never realized what the white form was, He never heard the single rifle report from high up on the hill above him. All Motley was conscious of was a terrific blow on the back of his head. Everything before his eyes was suddenly wiped out by a red curtain. Then—nothing. From his ambush on the hillside Ike had avenged himself!

Twisting slightly, Motley crumpled and fell. His shoulders hit flatly on the handle of the plunger, forcing it down under the weight of his lifeless body.

The earth strained and trembled. There was an ear-shattering explosion! A dense cloud of dust was hurled into the air, and through it rained jagged rocks, bits of wood and iron, heavy clods of dirt!

Ken plunged into the thick haze. He reached the crumpled heap that had been John Motley. He groped beside it on the ground, where he had seen him place the baby. There was only a gaping hole!

NOW everything was confusion. Men were pouring into the dusky circle. Frightened horses were running wild all over the place. Ken felt one bump into him.

Impatiently, he pushed it aside while he continued his frantic search for the baby. Again the horse came against his shoulder. Ken looked up and recognized Tarzan. His white bulk gleamed through the dust laden air.

"Go away, Tarzan," Ken ordered. "I——" The words froze in his mouth.

For Tarzan was holding the knotted corners of a white blanket between his teeth. And, swung safely in the blanket, was a happy, cooing baby! Tarzan had picked him up just as Ike fired the fatal shot, and had protected him in the blast that followed! With the baby safe in his arms, Ken strode out of the dust cloud, almost into Jane's arms.

"Ken!" she cried.

"Hello, Jane." He tried to seem casual.

"I've been trying so hard to find you! I wanted to tell you that I know all about the baby—that I'm so ashamed of the way I acted."

Ken swallowed hard. "That's all right," he murmured.

"But what's going to happen to him? The baby, I mean?"

"Reckon I'll keep him."

Jane looked at him, tenderly. "You can't, you know. They won't let you. He's got to have a mother."

He looked hard into her pretty blue eyes. "Reckon I'll have to get him one," he said, slowly. "I was goin' to get married soon, but the girl changed her mind."

"She's changing it back again, Ken," Jane ventured. "If you'll have her," she added. But Ken's strong arm about her shoulders removed all doubt from her mind.

Read how the famous

"RAINBOW PARADE" CARTOONS

are made . . . . in next month's

MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE

MAN of IRON

With the heart of a lion and the strength of ten, Big Chris couldn't lick his own worst enemy—himself!

"CHRIS" BENNETT'S big arms wielded the welding torch. Sweat ran over his smudged jaws. Working beside Tom Martin, Bennett was piling steel faster than the fabricating shop could take it.

Steam hammers clanged on iron. The drill presses squealed and ground. The huge shops of the Balding Steel Works clamored as hundreds of men pushed their machines to the limit. But appreciative eyes were on Chris Bennett.

Few men could roll steel from the welding department as did Big Chris. Other men appraised his work, nodded and smiled. This was unusual, but Chris Bennett working with the torch was unusual for he did not occupy the humble position of welder.

Big Chris was shop foreman of Balding Steel. He was working beside Tom Martin because Martin's welder was ill. Tom Martin was one of Bennett's neighbors.

"I don't see how you can take a welder's place, with your job what it is," Tom Martin shouted into his ear.

Big Chris swung another piece of hot steel into place. He grinned.

"My job's just the same as yours," he answered. "I happen to be general foreman, but my job as well as yours is to keep the plant moving."

And because of Chris Bennett's attitude with his men, Balding Steel was turning out orders at capacity. A few moments before tackling the welding job, Big Chris had stood beside a man at a drill press.

On this press a drill sputtered, burned and cracked. The driller was a new man. Big Chris himself pulled out the burned bit. Then he slapped the automatic oiler into position. A new drill bit went in cleanly, cutting the iron.

When Big Chris had walked on, the new man said fearfully to a man close to him, "Gee, I thought I'd get fired for that one!"

"Chris Bennett never fired anybody who told the truth and tried to do his job," grinned the other workman.

AT the moment Chris Bennett was help-

A fictionization of the First National picture of the same title.

THE CAST

BARTON MacLANE	Chris Bennett
Joseph King	Balding
John Eldredge	Ed Tanahill
Mary Astor	Vida
Joseph Crehan	Tom Adams

Directed by Wm. McGann
Story and screenplay by
Dawn Powell and Bertram Milhauser

ing out his men, Harrison Balding was talking to a sleek but scowling young man in his office. The man was Ed Tanahill, Balding's cousin.

"I'm making Bennett general manager of Balding Steel and you'll be a better man when you've had some training under him," announced Balding.

"But I'm your cousin," protested Tanahill. "Blood is thicker than water."

"Yes, it is!" Balding snapped. "But the life blood of this business, of any business is faithful experienced men."

Ed Tanahill smiled, but into his narrow eyes came a crafty look.

"Of course, I'll do all I can to help him," he said docilely.

But when Tanahill was talking with the young woman who acted as his secretary, a few minutes later, it was apparent that Chris Bennett would get little assistance from him. Ed Tanahill was livid with anger.

The girl, Vida Spencer, faced him bitterly. She had hoped Tanahill would step into the general manager's shoes.

"And you're going to be only his assistant?" sneered the girl. Then, as she thought a while, she added: "Well, that doesn't have to be such a rotten break if you play your job right, Ed."

When the amazed Chris Bennett, streaked with the oil and grime of the shop, was being informed of his new position, Ed Tanahill and his secretary already had made their own plans. There was no doubt from their conversation that they were sharpening a knife for Chris Bennett's back!

Believing all men to be square, unsuspicious of the man who was to "show him the ropes" of the office, Bennett went jubilantly to his home. Bessie, his wife, could hardly believe the good news as Chris burst upon her.

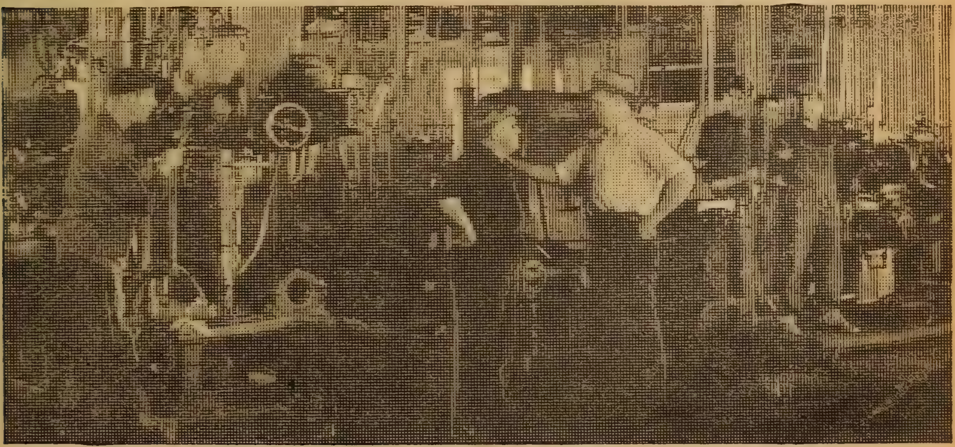
That evening there was much merriment in the Bennett home. Tom Martin and others of Bennett's neighbors came to congratulate him.

"It won't change anything for us," Chris declared to Bessie after his men had gone. "I'd feel much better back in the shop with the men, but this means more money. We'll get ahead."

Chris at the moment was in his home-made shower room. This bath was the product of his own hands. It was made of shop odds and ends.

"I suppose now," Bessie said, "you'll be buying yourself one of those fancy shower baths."

"Not me!" declared Chris. "The



"I happen to be general foreman, but my job as well as yours is to keep the plant moving."

things we have are plenty good enough. You'll never catch me paying out good money for fool gadgets when I can make a shower that really works."

FOR three months Balding Steel ran smoothly. The men from the shops came directly to Chris Bennett with their problems. He had power and responsibility beyond his wildest dreams. But Big Chris was far from satisfied with his position!

One afternoon, Chris Bennett told Ed Tanahill he wanted to resign. His heart was back in the shops. He felt he did not belong in the front office. Ed Tanahill was jubilantly writing the letter of resignation at Bennett's direction.

At that moment the door burst open. Tom Martin rushed in with an oily bearing in his hands.

"Hey, Chris!" he yelled.

"Hello, Tom!" greeted Bennett.

Ed Tanahill interrupted. He pushed himself between Tom Martin and the door.

"Mr. Bennett is busy at the moment," he said deliberately. "He can't see you."

"Busy, my eye!" Martin shouted angrily. "Nobody's going to be busy in this plant if we don't get some decent bearings soon. Look here, Chris——"

Martin shouldered the sleek assistant manager to one side. Rage flashed over Tanahill's face. He stood speechless as the workman put the dirty bearing in the middle of Chris Bennett's orderly desk.

"This is the fourteenth bearing we've burned out this week," Tom Martin complained.

He and Chris immediately became immersed in the trouble before them. For ten minutes they were oblivious to all else. Then the telephone rang sharply. Tanahill, answering, said, "Mr. Balding wants to see you at once, Mr. Bennett."

"Tell him I'm busy," rapped Chris. Then: "Never mind that letter. I'll resign in person when I see him."

When Bennett and Tom Martin went out, Tanahill sprang to Vida Spencer's desk. He told her Bennett was resigning, going back into the shops.

"And I'll be running this job myself!" gloated Tanahill, seizing the girl in his arms.

The girl seemed a bit doubtful. Her doubt was justified. When Chris broke the news to him, Balding refused to hear of his resigning. He told Chris that a wise man looked ahead, not back. He persuaded Bennett to remain as general manager.

Chris had not yet returned to his office when Tom Martin again sought him. Vida glanced significantly from Martin to Tanahill. She had arrived at a decision and a clever idea.

"Is Chris in?" Tom Martin asked.

"Mr. Bennett is out!" snapped Vida Spencer. "And hereafter you might speak more respectfully of the general manager."

"General manager?" said Tom Martin. "Why, Chris said he was going to——"

"You still believe what people say, don't you?" sneered the girl.

Tom Martin looked at the girl and Tanahill. He grunted an oath under his breath. The glass rattled in the door as he went out.

CHRIS BENNETT was a changed man. Tom Martin, a neighbor named Collins, and others of his men in the shops were having trouble. As the result of interference by Tanahill and sudden neglect by Chris, machinery was constantly breaking down.

Several times there had been emergency repairs in the boiler rooms. Now the firemen and engineers were keeping an eye on defective piping. There had been several minor blowouts. Attempts to reach General Manager Bennett with reports of the troubles had failed.

"Chris acts like they've got him doped!" declared Tom Martin, sweat pouring over his worried face. "Any day we're likely to have a serious smash, but Chris is too busy being a big shot to worry about us any more!"

Other men growled agreement. In the offices, Ed Tanahill and Vida Spencer had everything their own way. Tanahill had introduced Bennett at his country club. Balding had given dinner parties for the Bennetts.

Poor, bewildered Bessie Bennett was striving desperately to follow the lead of

When Big Chris had walked on, the new man said fearfully, "Gee, I thought I'd get fired for that one!"

her transformed husband. Chris was playing golf. He was letting an architect, one of Tanahill's friends, plan a swanky residence away from his old neighborhood. These things were taking up more and more of Chris' time, keeping him away from his real work.

Then came the morning when one of the boilers had to be cut out. Another boiler was leaking, and the safety valve was giving trouble. One of the helpers had been terribly scalded, attempting to keep the defective valve in operation.

Collins went directly to Chris' office.

"Listen, Chris himself told me to see him!" Collins shouted at Tanahill who barred his progress at the door of Bennett's outer office.

"I'm sure you're mistaken," said Tanahill suavely. "Mr. Bennett will be busy all morning."

"Well, let me see him just a minute," Collins said. "Either that, or we'll have plenty of trouble on our hands!"

"I'll find out, but I think it's useless," smiled Tanahill.

Collins glared at him. Tanahill walked into Bennett's office.

In a voice so low that Chris could barely hear—and Collins, in the other room, certainly could not, Tanahill said, "Mr. Bennett, there's a man out here from an investment company. Would you care to see him?"

The door was standing slightly open.

"No!" shouted Chris. "Absolutely not! Tell those fellows to quit bothering me!"

Collins heard. His face flamed with anger. Tanahill came out smiling.

"Mr. Bennett is much too busy to see you," he said.

Collins stamped his feet heavily as he went out. He had heard enough!

Vida Spencer looked at Tanahill. They smiled at each other.

"I believe you're learning, Ed," she said smoothly.

BACK in the shop, Collins was talking with Tom Martin.

"But I tell you I heard it with my own ears!" raged Collins.

"That doesn't sound like Chris," said Tom Martin loyally. "But we've got to do something or the shop'll go to pieces."

"Well, maybe he is busy," said Collins slowly, "but have a look out there, Tom!"

Chris Bennett, Tanahill and another man were getting into Chris' car. Chris was carrying a bag of golf clubs.

"Yeah!" said Collins bitterly. "I guess he is busy—learning to fit those monkey sticks into hands that were built for a monkey wrench!"

That evening Tom Martin waited for Chris near his home. Martin was doing his best to report the trouble in the shop. To his amazement he got only a curt, "save it for the office," from Chris.

"Well," said Tom Martin patiently, "we can come to your office like Collins did today and have 'em tell us you won't see us or else you're too busy—playing golf."

Chris Bennett flared with rage. He shook his fist under Tom Martin's nose.

"What business is it of yours if I have to play golf with other executives?"

"It's none of my business, Chris, but I'm your friend and I hate to see you making a fool——"

Chris seized Tom Martin by the shoulders and shook him vigorously.

"I'm not standing here to have you call me a fool!" he roared. "Have you got anything to say to me?"

Tom Martin released himself slowly and spoke with bitterness.

"I did have something to say, Chris, but I ain't so sure now."

He turned and walked away. Chris stared after him angrily. Yet he was somewhat ashamed of the encounter with the man who had been his friend for years.

Next morning Harrison Balding scowled at Chris Bennett. Chris stood before him in his old overalls.

"Is everybody out?" . . . . "Collins—he isn't," quavered the fellow. "But it's suicide to go in there after him!"

"Why, Chris, what's the trouble?" demanded Balding.

"I'm going back to the shops with the men where I belong."

"Nonsense, Chris! You're the general manager! There isn't a man in the plant could take your place!"

"Tanahill could, Mr. Balding!" said Chris. "He's smart! You ought to hear the letters he writes!"

"I know, Chris, lots of men can write letters," Balding said patiently. "But neither Tanahill nor anybody else can handle the men as you do. They trust you and look up to you."

"That's just it," declared Chris. "They have to look up to me. I want to get back among 'em. Lately I've sort of lost touch with them."

"You're wrong about that, Chris," smiled Balding. "The men have faith in you. You can't let them down."

Chris held out his big hands.

"Sometimes I think I already have let them down. I know they did have faith in me—maybe they still have——"

THE words were drowned by a reverberating blast. The office building jarred and rocked. As the echoes of the explosion died out, a siren started screaming. Chris was staring at the windows.

"The boilers!" he shouted. "One of 'em's let go!"

Chris whirled and charged through the door. Balding was close at his heels. Live steam poured from the boiler rooms. A man dashed out, his face raw with blisters.

"Run men, run!" he screamed. "The whole place is going up!"

Other men fled from the shops. Many stumbled blindly from the hissing cloud that made an inferno of the fire rooms.

"Did Collins get out?" shouted one of the men.

"No!" yelled another. "And if we don't hurry none of us will!"

Inside the hell that had been the boiler room, Collins was sticking to his post beside the safety gauge. With hands that were swollen to twice their normal size by the scalding steam, he wrenched feebly at the manual release lever!

In vain, Collins pulled on the lever. The steam gauge above him pointed high beyond the danger line. He, alone, was in danger. Fearing the results of a second explosion, the crowd outside cowered far off like frightened sheep.

Chris caught one of the men.

"Is everybody out?" he demanded.

"Collins—he isn't," quavered the fellow. "But it's suicide to go in there after him!"

Chris threw the man aside. Live steam poured over the general manager as he plunged into the boiler room. Death was waiting for him there, gathering with an ominous hissing in the boiler with its blocked safety valve!

CHRIS stumbled over Collins' body. His big hands grasped desperately at the release lever, but even his great strength was insufficient to free the valve!

Hot steam cut off his breath. With an effort, Chris groped his way back to Collins' body. He lifted the limp figure and carried it to a cooler corner. There he found a sledge hammer.

Guided now only by blind guess, he wrapped his coat around his head and started into the inferno of boiling vapor. He swung the sledge at the spot where the safety-gauge lever should be.

Four times he swung the hammer. It rebounded from the boiler's throbbing side. Chris could no longer breathe. In those few seconds he swore heavily. If he had not been self-inflated by the flattery of new friends, this never would have happened.

It had been weeks since he had even passed through the boiler room. He should have known of the increasing danger. Even facing what seemed sure death, Chris held no one responsible but himself.

That his men had attempted to reach him and report their fears for the boilers, and been turned away by Ed Tanahill, Chris did not know. He knew only that here was his responsibility. Either he cleared the escape valve and saved Collins and the plant, or he would go up with the blast he believed the result of his own negligence!

Again the sledge hammer swung. It was a lucky strike. All of the valve was smashed free. The released steam roared out in a searing, scalding cloud.

Chris hardly knew how he got Collins into his arms. He staggered into fresh air at the door and collapsed. A score of willing hands lifted the burden of Collins from the powerless arms.

HARRISON BALDING addressed a meeting of his workmen. Smiling Ed Tanahill, Vida Spencer and Chris Bennett were beside him.

Balding paid tribute to Chris, then stated, "I've decided it is a good time to make some changes. From now on we're going to have a new general manager—Mr. Ed Tanahill."

The shopmen attempted to conceal their instant disgust. Tom Martin looked contemptuously at Tanahill.

"What about Chris?" he shouted angrily.

A hundred workmen took up the cry. Balding held up his hand.

"Some of you men owe your lives, and all of us owe our jobs to Chris Bennett," he said. "I owe my factory to him—to

He staggered into fresh air at the door and collapsed.

Chris Bennett—your new vice president."

As Chris was caught up on the shoulders of the men nearest him, Tanahill stared at Vida Spencer. Their elation had been great at the announcement first made by Balding. They had felt for the moment that Tanahill's scheming had succeeded.

But Chris Bennett, the man from the shops whom they had sought to undo, now had been elevated to a position even above that of general manager!

Perhaps Bessie Bennett was even less pleased than the office conspirators.

Once more Chris Bennett's good resolutions were forgotten. He burst into his home and confronted his surprised wife.

"Bessie! Balding's made me vice president!"

He seized her in his arms, dancing her about the room.

"I'm vice president, Bessie! Do you hear? Me—vice president of the Balding Steel Works!"

Bessie stared at him helplessly when he let her go. Perhaps he was like a great, overgrown boy to her. Chris rushed to the telephone.

"Now I'm going to call up that architect and tell him to make the house bigger—and put a shower bath in every room!"

Bessie's whole figure drooped. She looked pathetically at the homely comforts of their humble house as if she were seeing them for the last time.

THOUGH the workmen had again given their allegiance to Chris Bennett, it became all too apparent his new official position had gone to his head. Even Balding was forced to smile tolerantly at the ready assumption of authority displayed by Chris.

But Balding had thorough faith in his workman vice president. He soon left to take his first vacation in five years. Chris found himself in complete control of Balding Steel.

Chris might have had less confidence in himself if he had heard a conversation between Ed Tanahill and Vida Spencer.

"I never knew such luck in my life," complained Tanahill.

"Brains can beat luck any day," Vida suggested slyly.

"Yes, and you watch me from now on——"

"Oh, Ed, I'm proud of you! I was afraid you might give up!"

"When I give up, that mechanic will be back in the gutter where he belongs!" declared Tanahill.

In the role of general manager, Tanahill had now greater opportunity for his crafty campaign.

Chris found himself suddenly relieved of burdensome details. Tanahill urged him to watch the builders of his big new house. With Tanahill's friends, architects, real estate men and others fawning upon the "newly rich" vice president of Balding Steel, Chris had no chance.

He mortgaged his salary for many years to come, sinking it all in as many costly appurtenances for his new house as the grafting architect and supply men could think up. Chris had come a long way from the shops and his home-made shower.

Egged on by Tanahill who assured him that all was well at the plant, Chris spent most of his time outside. So he knew nothing of an emergency situation arising at the shops.

Tom Martin had come to the offices demanding to see Chris.

"Mr. Bennett's inspecting his new house," said Tanahill loftily. "You'll have to tell me what's wrong."

Tom Martin held up a drill.

"Every piece of steel we've sent out on the Atlas order has been drilled oversize," said Martin. "If we don't get them corrected the whole order's going to be rejected."

Tanahill smiled and said, "Martin, you're paid to work in the shops—not to come up here making trouble."

"Chris! The men are rioting! You've got to stop them!"

"Trouble!" roared Martin. "I'm not going to drill any more of this stuff wrong until I speak to Chris!"

"You go back to the shop and attend to your own job!" ordered Tanahill. "When Mr. Bennett comes, I'll speak to him about this. Meanwhile, do what you are told!"

MUTTERING, rebellious workmen went ahead reluctantly. In the meantime, Tanahill assured Chris regularly that everything was going well. He suggested that Chris pay no attention to the petty troubles of the men in the shops.

This resulted in Chris cutting Tom Martin off short when he attempted to call his attention to the improperly drilled Atlas order. Chris said angrily to the dumfounded Martin, "I haven't time to attend to details around here. You stick to your own work. If you could see what we executives were up against, you'd quit bothering us."

The Chris Bennett they had once known was lost to his men. He was equally lost to Bessie, his wife. They argued heatedly. Chris ordered a station wagon in addition to an ornate new car. Bessie protested.

"Bessie, ain't you ever going to realize that I'm not a workman any more?" Chris countered. "I've got to keep up my position."

"I don't see how having more cars than we can ride in will do that," complained Bessie. "How are these new cars going to look driving up to our old bankroll?"

But Chris was drunk with power. He was going to show his high-powered friends how a vice president should live.

Then, after weeks, Harrison Balding returned from his vacation. He arrived unexpectedly in the middle of the day to discover Chris absent. Tanahill glibly explained the vice president's absorption in his new home.

Puzzled and worried, Balding went to his desk. There he found a notice from the Atlas Construction Company. Complaints on their over-sized order had been ignored. The company threatened cancellation and legal proceedings.

BALDING hurried to check up with the shops. He was waiting grimly when Chris arrived. Balding took up the matter of the Atlas order.

"How did it happen Chris? How long since you've been in the shops and checked up for yourself?"

"Well," explained Chris lamely, "I've been awfully busy building my new house, you know, and——"

"Steel is our business, Chris—not house building."

Ed Tanahill evaded all responsibility for the bad work on the Atlas order. Out of the mistake came Balding's edict—pay cuts for all in the office, overtime without extra pay for the men until the job was corrected. It was Chris Bennett's duty to see this was carried out.

Later, Chris discussed the situation with Ed Tanahill.

"You can't reason with mules, they have to be driven," declared Tanahill. "These men resent your success. I think this was a deliberate attempt to put you on the spot."

The inflated Chris took the bait.

"Put me on the spot, will they? I'll show them!"

He ordered both day and night shifts on two extra hours a day until further notice, with no time and a half for overtime. Tom Martin and other foremen attempted to reason with Chris. He rejected their appeals.

"You're darn lucky to have any jobs at all after what you've done!" asserted Chris.

"What *we* done?" said Tom Martin. "I tried to tell you for weeks while you've been building that crazy house——"

"My house is none of your business!" shouted Chris. "If you'd spent more time watching your drilling instead of prying into my affairs, this wouldn't have happened!"

Angry workmen agreed to accept the overtime work. But they declared it must end when the Atlas job was corrected.

While his workmen went grimly about correcting the mistake for which he was unconsciously responsible in trusting Ed Tanahill, Chris was piling up new debts. There came the day he sought a third mortgage on his property.

The mortgage agent handed Chris a jolt.

"The risk is high, Mr. Bennett," he said. "Mr. Balding himself advised the bank not to lend you any more money."

Chris carried his rage home to Bessie. He was preparing a grand splurge for the opening of his new and rather outlandish home.

"I'll not invite Balding!" he fumed. "If he had his way we wouldn't even have the new house! I used to think he was a real friend to me!"

"Chris," said Bessie bitterly, "are you sure you're being a real friend to yourself?"

"I'd better be," declared Chris. "I'm about the only one I've got left. Even you seem to be turning against me!"

CHRIS BENNETT was in his new home preparing for his swanky party. That same afternoon Tom Martin and others went to Ed Tanahill. They announced the Atlas order was finished. They demanded they be put back on regular working time the following day.

Tom Martin said Chris had promised this schedule. Balding was absent. After a hasty conference with Vida, Tanahill finally declared he could do nothing about it.

"If you men know what's good for you, you'll get back to your jobs!" he added.

"Oh, no we don't!" thundered Tom Martin. "We've done our part! You get us Bennett or there'll be trouble!"

The men advanced threateningly. Ed Tanahill resorted to the action of the cowardly man with a wabbly spine. He sprang to his desk and seized a revolver.

"Trouble?" he shouted nervously. "Get out of here before I kill you!"

"All right!" said Martin grimly. "We'll get out now!"

Tanahill dropped, quivering with fright, into a chair. He would have told them then Chris had already issued the order for the old time to be restored. But the cold-eyed Vida Spencer looked at him with scorn.

"Tell them now?" she sneered. "Why, they're playing right into our hands! The men are furious at Bennett! It's the end for him!"

Outside the men were mobbing around the wire fence inclosure of the offices. Balding arrived, excitedly seeking the cause for the trouble.

"I don't know, sir!" lied Tanahill. "They are angry at Bennett!"

Balding ordered Chris called at once. But Tanahill's effort to reach Chris came at an inauspicious time. For Chris was then in his over-sized, decorated shower bath at the new home. He was late for his first formal dinner in his new home. Guests were already arriving.

Outside the offices the men shouted, "Bennett! Bennett!"

They yelled down Balding's effort to talk to them. As Tanahill hung up the phone receiver, rocks began crashing into the windows. Vida Spencer stood to one side, smiling triumphantly.

"Our work's done," she gloated. "Let them riot!"

AT this moment the "best people" were attending Chris Bennett's house-warming. They listened to his conceited outbursts with amused pity. His showing off of his ornate estate—even his many shower baths—was good fun for his guests.

Even the butler was having difficulty repressing scornful smiles over Chris Bennett's attempt to prove he was a big executive. Poor Bessie, frightfully overdressed, was uncomfortable and worried.

Chris exulted over having the biggest banker in town as a guest. He boasted of having failed to invite Harrison Balding.

Again and again Tanahill telephoned, now in genuine fear of his own life. Chris was too busy to reply. Then in the midst of the after-dinner dancing, Harrison Balding dashed in.

"Chris, come on!" he shouted. "The men are rioting! You've got to stop them!"

"But what's the matter with them?" demanded Chris.

"They're shouting about their work schedule, but they won't even listen when I try to talk to them!"

"Schedule? Schedule?" said Chris.

"Didn't Tanahill tell them to go back on the old schedule?"

Balding stared at Chris. Understanding came to him at last.

"Did you tell Tanahill to do that?"

"He understood that thoroughly," said Chris. "Where is he?"

"He's down there now," said Balding. "He tried to get out, but they mobbed him and drove him back into the building."

"And I trusted Tanahill!" muttered Chris. "Didn't he speak to the men, Mr. Balding?"

"No," said Balding grimly. "He's done better than that. He's put in a call for the riot squad!"

"Riot squad?" shouted Chris. "He can't do that! Some of the men will be hurt! There'll be fighting!"

Bessie was standing close beside the two men.

"Oh, Chris, go stop them!" she pleaded. "This would never have happened if you'd been keeping in with the men instead of playing with this house! Go, make them listen, before some one is killed!"

Chris turned slowly. He looked at the throng of smiling guests.

"Bessie," he said, "tell these people to go home. The party's all over——"

FLARES lighted the surging wave of angry men outside the fence.

"Bennett! Bennett! We want Bennett!"

Tanahill was talking on the phone as Balding and Chris burst in.

"Yes—all the men you've got—and bring riot guns!"

Chris sprang across the office. He wrenched the phone from place.

"You fool!" he demanded. "Do you want the men murdered?"

"But they'll murder us," quavered Tanahill.

"Did you tell the men about going back on the old schedule?"

"I—I wanted to check up and be sure," mumbled Tanahill.

"So you called the riot squad to shoot them down, just to help you check up?" shouted Chris. "Well, I'll face them!"

Angry curses roared as Chris Bennett walked calmly to the fence and opened the gate. Rocks and clubs showered around him. Chris yelled to make himself heard.

"You're making a mistake! I'm trying to warn you! The riot squad's coming! You'll get shot!"

Shouts of rage drowned his voice. A thrown club struck Chris and staggered him. A huge workman followed the missile.

"We're tired of your rotten lies!" he shouted.

"Call me a liar?" raged Chris. He swung one big fist.

They plunged at each other. Yelling, "Kill him! Kill him!" the crowd surged forward. Some one swung a heavy wrench. Chris stumbled and fell.

Tom Martin and Collins, shoulder to shoulder, reached Chris' side. Their fists cracked down those in their way.

"Get back, you fools!" commanded Tom Martin. "You'll kill the boss! He was trying to warn you!"

Sirens screamed at the edges of the mob. Tom Martin and Collins picked up the vice president's limp body as the crowd melted before the rush of police cars.

LYING on a desk in the office, Chris slowly opened his eyes. He saw Tanahill, Vida Spencer, Tom Martin and the others.

"The men—are they all right?" whispered Chris.

"Yes," said Balding. "They've all gone home."

Chris swung his eyes slowly to Tanahill. The narrow-eyed general manager was trying to slip quietly from the office. Tom Martin stepped in front of him.

"Tanahill," said Chris, "did you tell

these men they were going back on the old schedule?"

"I tried to," muttered Tanahill, "but they wouldn't listen!"

Tom Martin's hard hand cracked across Tanahill's mouth.

"Tell him the truth, you rat!"

"I didn't have time," gulped Tanahill. "I was checking up."

Tom Martin caught Tanahill and held him grimly.

"Chris," he said, "did this fellow tell you two months ago that all of the Atlas stuff was being drilled wrong?"

"Why, no," said the amazed Chris.

Balding faced Tanahill with a grim, hard mouth.

"Do you mean to say, Ed Tanahill, you knew that and didn't report it?" demanded Balding.

"I tried—but—but——" stammered Tanahill.

Chris stumbled to his feet. He shook with rage.

"You tried?" he yelled. "You call out the riot squad to shoot my friends! Call 'em out again for this!"

His big fist crashed into Tanahill's chin.

CHRIS BENNETT'S society friends had departed. The disgusted butler was seeking to make an exit. The door burst open. Harrison Balding and Chris Bennett, accompanied by Tom Martin, Collins and half a dozen workmen, burst in.

"Get these folks some food!" Chris ordered the butler.

"But really, sir—I thought the party was over," protested the outraged servant.

"It is over!" said Chris grimly. "This is a new one! Bring on all the food in the house!"

Chris waved his arms in a sweeping gesture at his grand house.

"Well, here it is, folks!" he announced. "Look it over, 'cause it's your last chance!"

The men had consumed most of the food in the dining room when Chris smiled at everyone.

"Well, I'm glad you folks seen all this, 'cause it'll be something to remember," he said.

"Remember?" exclaimed Tom Martin. "Ain't you goin' to ask us again? I kinda like eatin' at the vice president's table."

"Well, I hope the new vice president asks you," grinned Chris.

"What do you mean, Chris?" interrupted Balding.

"Just what I say. I'm sellin' this house an' moving back to where I belong. I'm resigning as vice president."

"But, Chris," exclaimed Balding, "what are you going to do?"

"I'm humbly asking my old job back as foreman," said Chris slowly. "A working man belongs among his friends and neighbors. I'm a working man, Mr. Balding."

The lighted face of Bessie Bennett left no doubt but she thoroughly agreed with Chris.

A TRUE ADVENTURE STORY FROM

TED HUSING

in the Junior Adventurer's Corner

MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE

NEXT MONTH!

FEDERAL AGENT

Lives are cheap when a G-Man sets out to avenge the death of a friend!

MARTIN was head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, and was proud of his job.

But now, as he stood by his office window, he almost wished that some one else could momentarily take his place. He was thinking of the task before him, and he knew it was going to be unpleasant. He knew it would hurt one of "his boys," as he called his agents; yet, it had to be done. He could see this young agent walk smiling and laughing into his office, and then leave with an ache in his heart greater than any public enemy's bullet could cause.

Martin turned from the window. As he reached his desk, he spoke.

"Grant, it's going to be tough telling him."

Grant was another agent under Martin. A few minutes before, he had decoded a message from the Pacific Coast division of the department, and given it to his chief. He looked up at Martin.

"Tough is right," he agreed. "But Bob'll take it standing up."

Martin didn't reply. He knew how Bob would take it. He had seen Bob Woods face "tough" situations before.

"Funny thing, too," Grant remarked. "He was starting out there to-day on his vacation. He and Lynch were like brothers."

"That's just it," Martin said. "He needs a vacation. Hasn't had one in six years. But you know as well as I do, what he'll do now."

"Can't you stop him?" Grant asked.

"I have the right to, Grant. But not the heart."

At this point, the door swung open. It was just as Martin had pictured. There, in the doorway, was Bob Woods with a grin all over his face. And a sparkle in his eyes that seemed to light up his tired face made tense by months of hard work against those checked as "marked men" on the government lists.

"What do you want me for, Chief?" Bob asked. "Don't you know I'm going on my vacation, to-day?"

"Come in, Bob," Martin replied. "Got everything ready to go?"

THE CAST

BILL BOYD	Bob
Irene Ware	Helen
George Cooper	Wilson
Don Alvarado	Recard
Lenita Lane	Vilma

Produced by Winchester Pictures

Directed by Sam Newfield

Screenplay by Barry Farringer

A fictionization of the Republic Picture of the same title.

"You said it," Bob returned. "I'm going to California to see Jack Lynch. Y' know, I haven't seen him since you transferred him out there. But that old buzzard and I are going to make West Coast history when we get together!"

The chief picked up a radio message from the desk, toyed with it, then spoke without looking up.

"I've got some bad news for you, Bob."

"Now, wait a minute. Wait a minute," Woods protested. "Every fellow here has had a vacation, and I deserve——"

"Hold on, Bob," Martin interrupted. "You're right. You do deserve a vacation. You don't have to take this assignment, if you don't want it. However, I know you'd never forgive me if I didn't show you this." He pointed toward the message.

"Oh, all right," Bob groaned, disappointedly. "Let's have it."

Martin handed him the message. Bob unfolded it, looked at it. A strange, silent, emotional reaction was noticeable as he read:

PACIFIC COAST DIVISION

decoded by . . . Grant . . . 34
Lynch's body found this morning. Evidently murdered 48 hours ago. No clues. Awaiting instructions . . .
Wilson . . . 53.

"I'm sorry, Bob," Martin offered. He laid a gentle hand on his aid's shoulder.

Bob made no reply. He sat on the desk, picked up a cigar lighter made in the design of an airplane and began to twirl the propeller. There was a long, dreary silence. Finally, Bob asked:

"What was he on?"

Her face yielded a look of disappointment as she scanned the other records in the album.

"The Sanderson case," the Chief answered. "You can get all the information from Wilson on the West Coast."

"Any instructions?"

"No."

Martin and Grant watched Bob closely, as he trudged slowly to the door. Outwardly, he was calm, emotionless, braced by the thought that he was a federal agent. But inside, deep in his heart and mind, shorn of all artificialities, there was a torrent of loneliness and grief.

Bob pulled himself through the door. A young man was on his way to hunt down the mob who killed his pal—a federal agent was on his way to bring a criminal to justice.

AT eight o'clock the next morning a transport plane roared down the runway of the San Diego municipal airport after an all-night run from Washington. A taxi drew up alongside the big ship as she eased to a stop at the far end of the field. Bob Woods stepped out of the plane, into the cab, and instructed the driver.

A short time later, the cab screeched to a stop in front of a roadside lunch stand—the Paramount Hot Dog Stand. Bob paid the driver, told him to take the bags to the University Club, and walked up to the stand. He handed the attendant a bill.

"Give me change for the telephone, please."

"A two-dollar bill!" the surprised attendant remarked. "Don't see many of these out here—— Here's your change."

"Where's the telephone booth?" Bob questioned.

"Right through there." The attendant waved a direction.

Bob walked to the door the man had pointed out. He rapped, paused, then rapped again. The door was opened from the inside. Bob looked back over his shoulder, faced the door again, and walked into the emergency radio field station of the Pacific division of the federal agents. The two-dollar bill and the telephone talk had been the secret means of identification.

"Hello, Wilson!" Bob greeted the man facing him.

"Hello, Bob," Wilson returned warmly, as they clasped each other's hands. "I'm sure glad they sent you! But say—I can't tell you how sorry I am about Jack Lynch."

"The one who got him is the one who is going to be sorry." He added, "How did it happen?"

"There isn't much I can tell you," Wilson began. "Lynch and I had split up for a couple of days. The day we were supposed to meet, he didn't show up. I went to look for him and—well——"

"Buck up!" Bob almost commanded. "Where was he when you found him?"

"He was pinned under his car at the foot of an embankment," Wilson continued, "with a bullet through the back of his head."

"Yeah?" Bob remarked quietly. "Do you suspect anybody?"

"Yes. A fellow by the name of Recard," the other agent stated. "He was trying to swindle Sanderson in a deal for Sanderson's valuable explosive formula; probably worth half a million. Then Sanderson disappeared."

Bob lighted a cigarette. His face was a study in deep thought. He was trying to construct a faint clue out of the facts Wilson had given him.

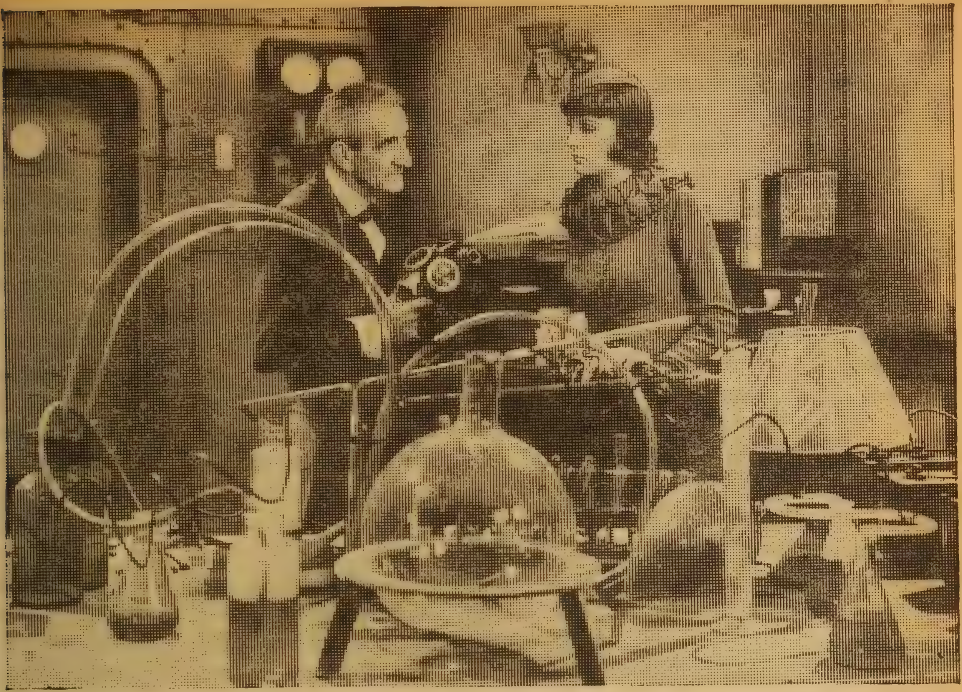
"Got a car?" He suddenly turned to Wilson.

"Yes. Out back."

"C'mon then." Bob was on his way to the door. "Let's take a look at Jack Lynch's apartment."

THE shades were drawn in Jack Lynch's apartment on B Street. The drapes rippled softly from the back window by the fire escape. The window had been left open.

A figure moved quietly about in the



"Sanderson is hiding in his workshop," Helen stated.

dim light of the room. The desk drawer was pulled open, papers pulled out, hurriedly scanned and put aside.

The figure at the desk suddenly became alert. It moved stealthily to the door. Outside, footsteps and voices were sounding from the stairway. The figure rushed back to the desk. Papers were crammed back into the drawer and the drawer slammed closed.

As it slid inward, there was a sound of metal rasping against wood. Something had caught in the closed drawer. The voices in the hall came nearer. The figure tugged at the desk. Suddenly there was a breaking snap, and the figure wheeled and raced for the open window.

The voices came to a strange halt outside the door. A key hurriedly turned the lock, the door burst open and the two federal agents charged in.

"The window!" Bob shouted. They both leaped across the room to where the drapes were flying in the breeze. They looked down from the window. A young girl was jumping off the last step of the fire escape ladder. She ran toward a car parked about a hundred yards from the house.

"Run down and try to get a line on that car!" Bob ground out to Wilson.

"I'm on my way," Wilson replied, climbing out of the window.

Bob turned from the window. He stopped, surveyed the room, then walked over to the desk. He pulled at the drawer. It opened several inches, but no more. It was jammed.

Bob examined the side walls of the drawer, slipped his fingers through the small opening and removed a piece of metal. It was part of a clasp from a woman's hand bag. He looked at the clasp, and then at the open window. A suspicion of a smile grew on his lips.

The crumpled papers informed the federal agent that the desk had been searched. He glanced over the documents, anyway. He was hoping to find some tangible evidence that might offer a lead to Lynch's murderer.

But the contents of the desk failed to reveal anything other than the clasp.

Bob got up from the desk chair, glanced around the walls and walked over to a pipe rack which hung near the fireplace. He selected one of the pipes.

His next move was to the phonograph on the opposite side of the room. He removed a record from the album and placed it on the machine. As the needle struck the record the amplifier poured out a familiar dance melody.

The record hadn't played very far when the front door swung open. Wilson, panting and gasping, was resting against the door jamb.

"Did you get anything?" Bob asked, quickly.

"Yeah," Wilson puffed, "sore feet! I ran for two blocks—— It was a dame, all right."

"I knew *that,*" Bob answered, simply.

"Oh," Wilson remarked, as the music reached a crescendo. "You wanted me to bring her back so we could have a dance, huh?"

Woods stopped the phonograph. "Get me some hot water."

"Yeah," grumbled Wilson, as he turned to the kitchen; "I could use some to soak my feet in."

BOB looked over several more records. He had selected another one, when his partner came back with a glass of warm water. Bob rubbed his finger into the bowl of the pipe. A black powder clung to the ball of his finger. He moistened the powder with the water and applied it to the label on the record.

The result almost caused Wilson to drop the glass. There before his own eyes, invisible letters appeared on the label.

U. S. Index 1432

"All right, Houdini," Wilson gaped; "how do you do it?"

"Simple, my dear Wilson," Bob smiled back. "Jack Lynch and I used this gag before."

Bob placed the record on the spinning turntable. A weird Chinese symphony droned out. This soon changed to a dull moan. Bob reached for the speed adjustor and turned it to the slowest speed possible. The moan changed into a low, distinct voice:

"Operator 36. Jack Lynch reporting. . . . June 12th. Contacted Sanderson. His experiments prove that he has devised a formula for the most deadly explosive known. . . . June 15th. Learned Recard is trying to contact Sanderson to get possession of the explosive formula. It is worth half million to foreign interests. Am trying to contact Recard. . . . June 21st. Sanderson has disappeared. Suspect Recard. Intercepted code message from Recard stating Vilma Kantos will arrive June 30th on Pacific Express. . . . June 24th. . . . Have arranged to meet Recard to-morrow."

The voice stopped. Bob shut off the machine.

"From that record," Wilson cried, excitedly, "Lynch was going to meet Recard on June 25th!"

"And that was the day he was shot," Woods replied, pensively.

"Well, that's *that!*" Wilson dusted off his hands. "We grab Recard and the case will be in the bag!"

"When we *get* him, Wilson. And I don't think that will be easy. But when we do, we want to have enough evidence to put a rope around his neck."

"But who's this Vilma Kantos?" Wilson was puzzled. "Coming in on the *Pacific Express."*

"Say!" Bob shot back. "That record said she would land on June 30th. That's to-day!"

"You took the words right out of my mouth," Wilson grinned back.

"Wait a minute," Bob warned, as he

Some one had knotted the cord of the earphones around Wilson's throat. He was dead!

grabbed the telephone. "Hello, operator? . . . Connect me with the Pacific-Orient Steamship Company—and hurry, please. It's urgent. . . . Hello. Pacific-Orient? . . . What time will the *Pacific Express* dock? . . . Eleven o'clock? . . . Thanks."

Bob hung up the phone, whirled around to Wilson.

"Hey, buddy! Pack those sore feet of yours in a suitcase and come on."

They dashed out through the door.

IT was eleven-twenty-five. The *Pacific Express* had been docked since eleven o'clock, so the last stragglers were coming down the gangplank. Woods and Wilson had put "the eye" on each and every passenger as he or she came ashore. They had seen no Vilma Kantos.

"Looks like she gave us the slip," Wilson remarked, with a glance up at the empty decks.

"C'mon," Woods called. "We'll check with the immigration people."

They were about to turn and go when a little Filipino steward came to the head of the gangplank. He was carrying two heavy traveling bags. He came down the gangplank, passed the two agents.

"Um-m-m!" sniffed Wilson. "Perfume!"

Bob stepped quickly up to his partner.

"Don't you get it?" he whispered.

"The uniform coat? What man ever buttons a double-breasted coat on the left hand side? It's that Kantos dame!"

The Filipino had headed for the land end of the pier. The two agents followed their suspect to the street. A chauffeur and limousine were waiting there. The "steward" placed the bags in the back of the car and got in the front seat with the driver. The two agents watched the car drive off.

"Well," offered Wilson, "she is sure playing that steward gag to the limit."

"Yeah," Bob answered. "But let's go. We got to trail that car."

THE Sagamore Hotel was the largest and most luxurious in San Diego. In its busy lobby a young girl was sitting quietly and inconspicuously on one of the lounges. She displayed no evidence of anxiety or anticipation. Although, at certain intervals, her gaze scanned the faces in the crowded lobby.

The arrow of the elevator floor-indicator was motionless at No. 4. It started to move. Three—two—one. As the grilled door opened onto the lobby floor, a tall dark-complected man stepped out.

He was nonchalant, well-groomed, and sleekly handsome. He peered around the lobby, then strode over to where the young girl was sitting. He said nothing, sat down rather unconcernedly beside her and picked up the stray newspaper on the seat. After a moment, he spoke softly to the girl, without looking up from the paper.

"Helen, did you find anything in that apartment?"

"No," the girl answered, looking straight ahead. "Some men came in and interrupted me. I had to run."

"You'll have to try again."

"I can't, Recard; they'll be watching."

"You have to." Recard's tone was firm. "I want to be sure Lynch left no evidence against us."

The girl hesitated. Then: "I'll try," she reluctantly agreed.

Recard glanced at his wrist watch. It showed quarter of twelve.

"Kantos should be here any minute. You meet her down here. I'll be up in my room."

Helen nodded that she understood. Satisfied, Recard got up and walked back to a waiting elevator. Helen turned her head from the elevator to the main entrance of the hotel.

She had looked just in time, for the little "Filipino steward" was coming through the revolving doors. Helen crossed the lobby, greeted her and walked several steps with her.

The revolving doors flopped around again. Bob Woods and Wilson came into the lobby. They stood close to the door, watching the "steward" and the other girl.

"Take my luggage to Room 412, steward," Helen instructed in a raised voice. "I'll be up later." Then she added, softly, "He's waiting there for you, Vilma."

The two agents watched the pair walk away. They had been unable to overhear any of the conversation. They hurriedly drew plans to meet any subsequent happenings. Wilson was to find out what and who this "steward" was, while Bob trailed the girl.

Wilson missed the "steward's" elevator by several steps. He watched the floor indicator stop at four, and followed in the next car.

Bob followed Helen to the news stand. He picked up a newspaper and covertly watched her buy a magazine. His eyes focused on her hand bag. As she opened it to pay the attendant, Bob's eyes opened wide. Part of the clasp on the hand bag was missing!

FROM behind his newspaper, Bob saw Helen return to the lobby and sit down to read. He gave her time to get settled before going over beside her. After several moments of pretending to read, Woods commented aloud, "Strange—this

"If you weren't so stupid, you'd have guessed long ago that I'm a federal agent!"

fellow Sanderson disappearing, isn't it?"

Helen was startled, but concealed her emotion by carefully ignoring him. The federal agent, still stabbing in the dark, offered more comments about Sanderson and the priceless explosive formula, in an attempt to draw her into conversation. The girl replied with a constrained silence. Finally, she turned impatiently.

"Will you please stop annoying me?"

"I'm sorry," Bob grinned. "I really wanted to talk business."

"*Business?*" The girl was alarmed.

"Yeah. Y'see, I know a lot about you."

"What do you know?"

Bob looked straight at her. Then he spoke. "That your eyes are pretty—that you should smile more—and, that you're after the Sanderson formula!"

The last shot went home. Helen stared at him in amazement. Then she laughed to cover up her true reactions. Through her laugh, Bob continued:

"I'm also after that formula."

"Well, I hope you get it," she answered, abruptly. Her manner gave evidence that she was trying to end the conversation there.

"I'll get it," Bob said, meaningly.

"But, I wouldn't mind cutting in a partner."

The girl looked directly at him. She was beginning to show interest.

Bob faked a story that he was able to get over a half million dollars for the Sanderson formula. This proved to be a good move, for it gained the girl's confession that she too, was after the formula; was working for another crowd.

"I could forget this other crowd, for the right amount," she said.

"We'll split fifty-fifty," Bob stated. His tone was casual, yet assuring. He was expecting to learn more from the girl; but she put down her magazine and got up.

"Going somewhere?" Bob asked, pleasantly.

"I have to go uptown for lunch," she replied. "We'll discuss this business later."

"May I take you in my car?" Bob offered.

"Well——" the girl hesitated; "all right. But will you wait until I make a phone call?"

"Sure."

As she disappeared into the telephone booth, Bob picked up her magazine and walked to the desk.

"Excuse me," he addressed the clerk. "Did you notice that young lady I was talking to?"

"Oh, yes," the clerk replied. "That is Miss Helen Gray, one of our guests."

"She asked me to have you put this magazine in her key rack. She'll pick it up later."

The clerk flipped the magazine into the pigeonhole under "Room 620."

Bob smiled to himself. The magazine trick had rewarded him, not only with the girl's name, but her room number also. He was about to walk away when some one touched his elbow. It was Wilson.

Bob looked at his friend and then at a deserted corner of the lobby. Wilson nodded, understandingly.

In the corner, the two agents talked quietly.

"Now get this," Bob instructed. "That girl is Helen Gray. She's the same one we saw leaving Lynch's apartment."

"Yeah?"

"And she's tied up with Recard in this Sanderson business. The formula's big money for them. She has Room 620. Get the room next to it, and plant a dictaphone set-up."

IN the phone booth, Helen had Recard on the wire. She was telling him of her conversation with Woods. From his tone, she knew Recard was pleased at the way she had handled the stranger.

"But," added Recard, "if he's another federal agent, we'll knock him off!"

"I don't think he's an agent," Helen replied. "He's after dough."

Recard instructed her to continue to draw the stranger out. Then she was to make an appointment to see Sanderson, and, if possible, get back and search Lynch's apartment.

"After you contact Sanderson, phone me," Recard concluded. "I'll be up in your room. I'm afraid some one might try to pay your room a visit and I want to be there to welcome them."

"That's a good idea," Helen said. "I'll see you later."

WILSON'S car was pulled to the curb, far uptown from the hotel. Bob and Helen were sitting there talking more about the Sanderson deal. Two hours ago they had been strangers, Helen had remarked. Now, they were business partners. To herself, she was thinking what a sap Woods was.

"What about this other outfit you were working for?" Bob asked.

"They can't do anything without me," she assured him. "I'm the only one who can contact Sanderson."

Without saying any more, she opened the door of the car. Bob was momentarily surprised. Then he remembered.

Bob and the girl carried on their bluff, knowing that they had a sinister audience in the hall.

"Your friend lives near here?" he asked.

"Yes. That's why I asked you to stop here."

Through the branches of the trees Bob could see the street sign. It read: "B STREET."

Helen stepped to the curb, turned around and thanked him for the ride. Bob drove the car away from the curb; but in the rear-vision mirror, Helen was turning up B Street.

A few minutes later, music poured out of the phonograph in Lynch's apartment. Helen Gray was making her second attempt to carry out Recard's instructions. She listened intently for a while, and then stopped and removed the record.

A second and a third record were played and discarded. Her face yielded a look of disappointment, as she scanned the other records in the album.

Suddenly, the lights flashed on in the room. At the same time, a voice called from the door, "Maybe *I* can find the right record!"

Helen whirled. Her expression of alarm was uncontrollable, as she stared at Bob Woods standing in the doorway. She was unable to speak, as he came toward her. He brushed past her, picked up a record and started it spinning on the machine.

"Operator 36. Jack Lynch reporting" —it was the same record he had played for Wilson in the morning. *"June 12th. Contacted Sanderson. His experiments prove that he has devised a formula for the most deadly explosive known. . . ."*

Bob was watching the girl closely. Slowly, the droning, mechanical voice was bringing her to the breaking point. The record had overcome all her former poise and restraint.

"*Learned Recard is trying. . . .*" the record continued.

"Stop it!" Helen screamed. "Stop it!"

"*. . . to contact Sanderson. . .*"

"Please stop it," she sobbed. Helen had broken.

"*. . . to get possession of the explosive formula . . .*"

Helen's trembling hand lunged out to knock the needle from the record. Quickly, Woods grabbed her by the wrist and flung her into a chair. With her face buried in her arms, she sobbed bitterly. Bob sensed this was the beginning of the end, so he struck fast.

"COME on, spill it!" he demanded. "What's the lowdown on this gang you're working for?"

"I'm not working for any gang," Helen pleaded.

"Why are you hooked up with Recard and Vilma Kantos?"

"I can't tell you."

"Who killed Jack Lynch?" Bob was throwing questions relentlessly.

"I don't know."

"Quit stalling! You led him into a trap, so Recard could put a bullet in his back!"

"No—no!" the girl screamed. She was dazed and weary from Bob's incessant questioning.

"Why did you break when you heard Jack Lynch's voice?"

"I can't tell you!"

"Don't try to cover up Recard," Bob hammered again.

"I'm not! I hate Recard! I *hate* him!" Helen had suddenly become defiant. Her eyes burned with a fierce hatred.

"That's a laugh," Bob sneered.

"Just give me twenty-four hours and I'll prove it to you!"

"How?"

"By putting Recard into your hands."

While Bob hesitated, Helen changed her attack from pleas to logic. She explained that he had nothing on Recard, but that she could get the necessary evidence for him. She had only gone into the Sanderson deal, she told him, so that she could put Recard where she wanted him.

The federal agent didn't want to lose Recard, nor did he want any harm to come to old Sanderson. "O. K., girl; twenty-four hours," he said. "But I want Sanderson's address."

"Sanderson is hiding in his workshop," Helen stated. "It is at the end of Old Elm Road."

Bob wrote the address on the back of an envelope and put it in his inside coat pocket.

"Thanks for giving me this chance," Helen called from the door. "I'll report to you within twenty-four hours."

Bob made no reply. His better judgment told him he was wrong in allowing her to go free.

RECARD was lounging in a big, comfortable chair in Helen's room. At arm's-reach there was a tinkling highball glass and a greasy rag. Between sips from the glass, Recard used the rag to polish a vulgar-looking automatic.

The telephone bell suddenly disturbed his ease. He lifted the instrument and listened. He was waiting for the party at the other end to speak.

"Recard?" the voice asked. "Helen speaking."

"Go ahead," Recard answered.

Helen spoke rapidly. "Get out of the hotel immediately, Recard. They've got us spotted there! I've arranged to stall for twenty-four hours, but we'll have to close the Sanderson deal at once and get away!"

"Have you made our date with him?" Recard asked.

"I'm on my way to Sanderson now."

"All right," Recard concluded. "I'll meet you at the headquarters at 43 Bay View at four o'clock."

As he came away from the phone, Recard's eyes accidentally ran toward the picture molding. In another instant, he had pulled a chair to the wall and was standing on it. Thrusting his hand along the tiny ledge, he discovered a thin black wire. He followed it back across the room to a picture near the telephone table.

Quickly lifting the picture, Recard saw a small black microphone. He looked toward the adjoining room, picked up his gun and walked out of the door.

BOB'S watch showed ten minutes after four, as the elevator took him to the sixth floor of the Sagamore Hotel. Room 622 was three doors down the hall. Wilson had moved in next to the girl. Bob knocked. There was no response. He knocked again.

"The old rascal must be asleep," he muttered to himself. A turn of the knob revealed that the door was unlocked. Bob walked in.

Wilson was stretched out on the bed, with a pair of earphones clamped on his head and the bedclothes pulled up around his neck.

"Hey! Wake up!" Bob yelled. "We've got work to do!"

Wilson refused to move. Bob playfully jerked the covers and tossed him out on the floor. He lay there, motionless. Bob was down beside him in an instant, slapping him, talking to him, shaking him. But Wilson was limp.

Slowly, Bob straightened up. His face cramped with understanding, he stood there bewildered. Some one had knotted the cord of the earphones around Wilson's throat. He was dead!

The sight of Wilson's tightly clenched fist brought Bob out of his temporary

Bob hadn't had time to whip out his gun before he leaped; Recard's was lost to him.

coma. He knelt down again and pried it open. A blank piece of paper was crumpled in the palm. He rushed it to the heat of the desk lamp.

Under the strong light, the invisible ink rewrote its message:

> The "steward" was Kantos—Recard's girl friend. Both at headquarters 43 Bay View.

THE window creaked slightly and slid upward, as Bob pushed from the ground below. Wilson's note had led him to an old three-story house at the end of Bay View Avenue.

With a leap, he was on the sill and ready to step into the room.

"Don't go any farther!" a voice commanded, quietly.

Bob ignored the warning, stepped down onto the floor. Helen Gray was covering him with her pocket automatic.

"Put that gun down," he ordered, calmly.

"Please don't stay here," she begged. "If they find you, it's death for both of us!"

Her plea fell on deaf ears. "Where's Recard and that Kantos dame?"

"Upstairs with Mullins, his chauffeur," Helen replied. "But please go! Please give me the time I asked for!"

"I fell for that gag—once," Bob said. "Just long enough for my partner to be murdered!"

"Your partner—murdered?" Helen was stunned.

"That's news, I suppose?" Bob remarked, sarcastically. "But the party's over, sister, and I'm going to swing every one of you for it!"

He grabbed up the telephone.

"Don't! Don't!" Helen cried out. "That phone signals upstairs to Recard!"

"That's fine! I won't have to go after him. He'll come to me."

The girl crossed to him in one last desperate effort. She grabbed the receiver out of his hand and placed it back on the hook.

"Don't you realize," she said, "I'm trying to save your life? I got Sanderson away from Elm Street to save him from Recard! So believe me when I tell you——"

She stopped short. In the hall, faint footsteps were touching the stairs. They both listened. Some one was trying to come downstairs without being heard.

"Quick!" Bob whispered to Helen. "Level your gun at me! Level your gun at me!"

Then he began to talk loud—loud, and at a fast pace.

"You think you're pretty smart, don't you? You're not! If you weren't so stupid you'd have guessed long ago that I'm a federal agent! Not only that, you wouldn't have allowed me to get to Sanderson and put him where you can't reach him!

"Ha! Smart, are you? Go on, pull that trigger; but you'll never find Sanderson if you do! And let me tell you one more thing, sister: you can't kill a federal agent and get away with it!"

"You're mistaken, my friend," Recard's voice suavely announced.

BOB and Helen turned toward the hall. Recard, Vilma Kantos and Mullins were coming through the door. Recard's automatic was pointed threateningly at Bob.

"That's what *you* think." The federal agent glared at the dark-visaged Recard.

"Perhaps I'll have to prove that you're wrong"—Recard advanced on Woods—"just like I did for Mr. Lynch."

Bob's face turned red with rage, then grim white, as he heard Recard's open confession. A glance at Helen told him she, also, was having difficulty masking her true emotions.

"We have no time to waste," Recard continued. "So tell me, where have you put Sanderson? That formula of his is worth much to me!"

The federal agent's reply was a contemptuous, ridiculing smile. Recard's face tightened with anger. He jammed the gun into Bob's stomach.

"Where is Sanderson?"

"You'll never find out by pulling that trigger," Bob answered. His eyes were narrow slits.

Recard turned to the others, "Search him!"

Only one thought raced across Helen's mind while Vilma and Mullins went through Bob's pockets: Did he still have the envelope with Sanderson's address? A moment later, her anxiety was arrested.

"Here it is!" Vilma exclaimed, as she waved an envelope toward Recard. " 'Sanderson . . . workshop at end of Old Elm Road.' "

Five minutes later, Recard and Helen were ready to depart for the inventor's workshop. Mullins had tied Bob, hand and foot, and pushed him into a chair. Recard's instructions were for Vilma to signal his yacht to be ready in two hours, and for Mullins to "take care" of the agent in the event that they ran into any trouble at the workshop.

"Don't spoil his good looks, though, Mullins," Helen remarked, from behind Bob's chair. "I hear he's quite a lady killer."

She ran her hand scornfully through his hair, and turned away. As she moved from his chair, Bob felt something slide down between his back and the chair. He caught it with his bound hands. It was a sharp-edged paper knife.

Helen and Recard had gone quite a while before Bob severed the cords on his wrist. It had been torturous work, using the knife without giving notice to Vilma and Mullins.

Vilma was just starting upstairs to the radio room when Bob's hands parted behind him. Suddenly, he noticed that Vilma had stopped halfway up.

"Hey, Mullins!" she called down to the drawing-room. "What's the matter with Recard? I don't know how to work this radio up here! You'll have to do it!"

Mullins, with a glance at Bob, walked out into the hall. "All right. You watch this government mug, and I'll signal the yacht."

He handed the gun to her, climbed on up the stairs and into the radio room.

Downstairs, Vilma strolled back into the drawing-room. Before realizing what was happening, the gun was snatched from her and she was pushed to the floor. Bob had freed himself.

Vilma's shrieks brought Mullins bounding back down the stairs, but the gun in Bob's hand brought him to a sudden halt.

Quickly, Bob handcuffed the pair to the stair balustrade, and then dashed out of the house in pursuit of Recard and Helen.

RECARD and Helen were walking through the laboratories in Sanderson's workshop basement. Recard was storming because the old man wasn't there. Helen suggested that perhaps the federal men had taken him some place where no one would be able to find him.

"But," she added, "he keeps all his valuable papers over there in that safe."

Instantly, Recard had his ear against the safe, turning the combination dial. Helen watched him carefully, cautiously. Then she interrupted.

"Turn around!"

Recard swung around. His eyes widened, narrowed, then a sneer came over his lips. Helen had her automatic trained on him. It seemed all of her body reflected the deep hatred she professed to have for the man in front of her.

"I won't shoot you in the back, like you did Lynch," she said, bitterly.

"What's Lynch got to do with you?" Recard snarled.

"Jack Lynch was my brother," she replied, in a low voice.

"So," Recard smiled, "you're going to turn me over to the authorities, are you?"

"No. I could have done that long ago," Helen answered. "But I've waited for this! See that nitrogen chamber over there? It's an invention of Sanderson's. You're going in it! It'll be a vacuum in ten minutes, and that'll seem like years when you're smothering—— *Back up!*"

As Recard obeyed, Helen followed him step for step. Suddenly, Recard's hand leaped out at the table lamp. It crashed into a waste heap beside the table.

In the momentary darkness, Recard wrestled the gun out of the girl's hand and it fell to the floor. While they groped for it a flame flickered in the pile of chemical-soaked waste. Instantly, the entire mass was ablaze and spreading rapidly in all directions.

The gun reflected the light of the flames. Helen reached for it, but Recard kicked it away. As she started for it again, his fist sent her sprawling dazed to the floor. With the fire throwing his shadow about the room, Recard carefully aimed the gun at Helen.

"You'll never tell what you know!" he screamed insanely.

As he steadied his aim, a figure leaped toward him from the basement stairs. They both crashed to the floor. Recard's gun flew across the room. Through the fire, Helen could see the struggle. It was Bob and Recard, slugging toe to toe. Bob hadn't had time to whip out his gun before he leaped; Recard's was lost to him.

Bob's fists pounded Recard and he went down again. Bob dived after him. But Recard's feet caught him in the stomach and sent him sprawling backward. On their feet again, Bob hammered his fist into Recard's face. Recard crashed back into a bottle-strewn laboratory table. The table broke under his weight, and he fell to the floor in a shower of broken tubes and bottles.

Immediately, smoke and fumes swarmed up around him. Escaping chemicals hissed across his screaming face. He tried to get up, but dropped back helplessly.

Bob staggered away from the table. Coughing, choking, he made his way toward Helen. He flung his coat over her, picked her up and made his way up the stairs.

As they reached the front door, a thundering roar came from the direction of the laboratory. The chemical-fed fire had weakened the walls, and they had crumbled down.

Recard lay there, half buried under the timber and plaster. Ironically, his gun was just a few inches from his outstretched hand. Never would he disprove the statement Bob had uttered, "You can't kill a federal agent, and get away with it."

Recard was dead.

GRAND EXIT

A Columbia picture, with Edmund Lowe, Ann Sothern, Onslow Stevens, Robert Middlemass, and Wyrley Birch.

Presenting a new kind of detective—Edmund Lowe—as the man who finds out who is causing the mysterious incendiary fires which are costing his insurance company hundreds of thousands of dollars in life and property losses. The mystery gives this film sustained interest, and the fire sequences give it rare thrills. It's been a long time since Hollywood has produced a good rousing fire picture; we're glad they remembered the formula for this one.

A SMOKE-EATING PHILO VANCE GETS THE GOODS ON A BEAUTIFUL GIRL.

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 65

IN PERSON

A Radio picture, with Ginger Rogers, George Brent, Grant Mitchell, Spencer Charters, and Edgar Kennedy.

The same William Seiter who made "She Couldn't Take It" so much fun, is responsible for a great deal of the success of this film—he and Ginger Rogers, who is now standing on her own feet as a star. And maybe we should add that the original story was written by the same Samuel Hopkins Adams who wrote the story for "It Happened One Night." With all these elements, you ought to be sure without our telling you, that "In Person" is a mirth-maker of the first water. It's all about a movie star who can't stand being stared at by her adoring public.

LOTS OF FUN FOR EVERYBODY, FROM GRANDMA TO THE BABY.

ONE WAY TICKET

A Columbia picture, with Lloyd Nolan, Peggy Conklin, Walter Connolly, Edith Fellowes, and Thurston Hall.

This is really a different sort of story—the "different" one every picture advertisement would have you believe it is. Peggy Conklin is the daughter of the captain of the guards at a great prison. Innocently, she falls in love with a convict, keeps her knowledge of his plans to escape to herself. She flees with him and tries, after they are married, to keep him going straight. And that's where the surprises set in.

REALISTIC JAIL STORY, WRITTEN BY A WOMAN WHO GREW UP IN THE SHADOWS OF PRISON WALLS—THE CAPTAIN'S DAUGHTER IN REAL LIFE.

FRISCO KID

A Warner Brothers picture, with James Cagney, Margaret Lindsay, Ricardo Cortez, and Lili Damita.

In the days when Vigilantes were in style, a hard young man called the Frisco Kid, was San Francisco's big obstacle to law and order. In the end, it fell to the lot of the Vigilantes to clean up around town, which they did. But they missed the Kid because—— Well, there's a girl in it. We'll admit that much, but you'll have to see the picture for the full answer. There's plenty of realism and action when those Vigilantes get going!

IT'S GETTING SO THAT YOU DON'T THINK OF GANGSTERS OR G-MEN EVERY TIME CAGNEY APPEARS. HE'S A GOOD ENOUGH ACTOR TO LIVE THAT DOWN.

Continued on page 126

SONG of the SADDLE

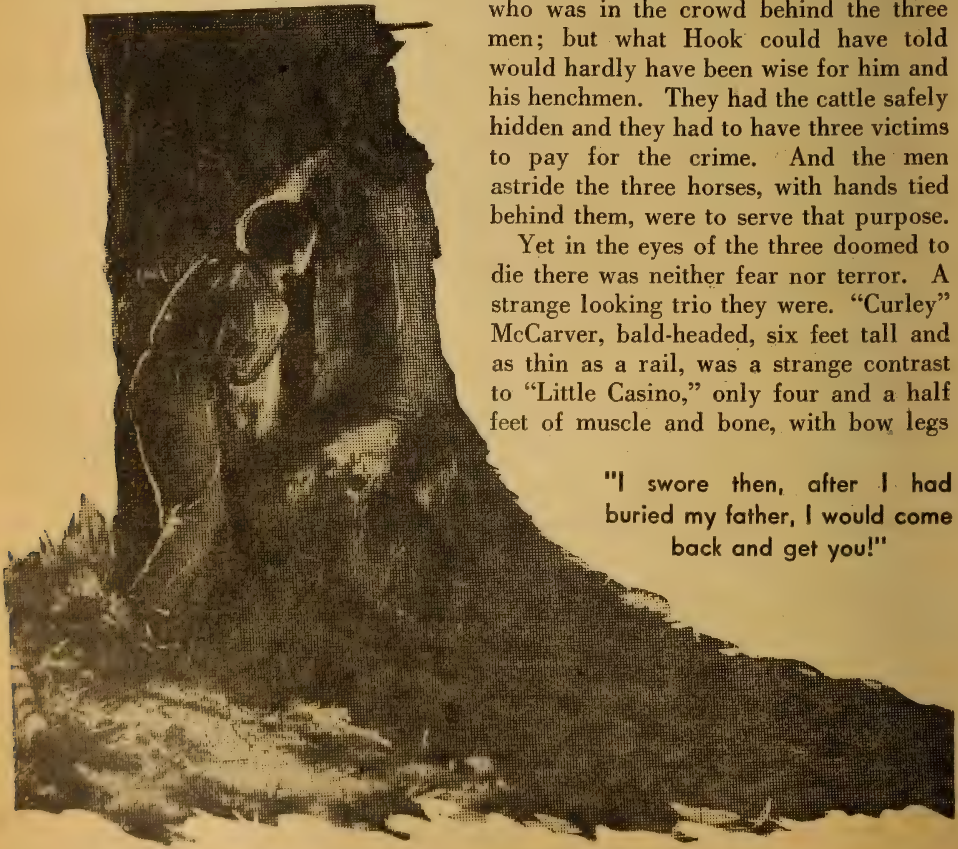
The Singing Kid teaches certain leading citizens of Temple County a new tune!

THE three men, each riding a paint pony, arms and hands tied at their backs, were driven toward a grove of trees by the mob of lynchers that rode behind them. Each of the three had a rope around his neck, held by men who led that grim procession of death.

The condemned men were charged with cattle stealing. They had protested their innocence, but leading the lynchers was Phineas Hook. For ten years, since the opening of the Arapaho Indian Country by President Zachary Taylor, Hook and his two henchmen, Jake and Simon Banion, had ruled the county, aided by a band of cutthroats enlisted from all parts of the West.

Hook could have told much about the cattle stolen from Tim Porter, the rancher who was in the crowd behind the three men; but what Hook could have told would hardly have been wise for him and his henchmen. They had the cattle safely hidden and they had to have three victims to pay for the crime. And the men astride the three horses, with hands tied behind them, were to serve that purpose.

Yet in the eyes of the three doomed to die there was neither fear nor terror. A strange looking trio they were. "Curley" McCarver, bald-headed, six feet tall and as thin as a rail, was a strange contrast to "Little Casino," only four and a half feet of muscle and bone, with bow legs



"I swore then, after I had buried my father, I would come back and get you!"

THE CAST

NICK FORAN	The Singing Kid
ALMA LLOYD	Jen Corbun
Pat West	Curley
Victor Potel	Little Casino
Charles Middleton	Phineas Hook
Monte Montague	Simon Banion

Production Supervised by Bryan Foy
Directed by Louis King
Story and screenplay by William Jacobs

A fictionization of the Warner Brothers Picture of the same title.

and a never fading smile. The third, Jose Vaquez could have easily passed for a musical comedy type of a vaquero. A gay serape was tossed over his shoulder. His jacket was gold braided, with a scarlet sash.

"YOU'RE going to hurt somebody," Jose said, "puttin' rope on neck like this."

"That rope," Hook shot back, "goes around the neck of every cattle thief and——"

"Hook," Tim Porter said nervously, "I ain't sure these men stole my cattle."

"Listen, Porter," Hook replied, "I'm sure—so sure I'm fixing them so they can't do it again."

The procession came to the grove of trees. Hook and the Banion brothers wasted no further time talking. Their job was to see that these three innocent men got hung and they went about the work like men who had done the same thing many times before.

Jake Banion threw the ropes over three trees, while Simon Banion and Hook tied the other ends to their saddle horns.

"Let her go, Jake," Hook cried.

In less than a minute it would all be over and the mystery of the stealing of Tim Porter's cattle settled in the eyes of the community. Porter and his men watched, without taking any part in the lynching. The rancher shook his head slowly, showing his disapproval of the hangings.

Jake Banion turned to fan the horses out from under the victims, but as he did, a voice came out of nowhere—a cold, deadly voice that caused a chill to run down the backs of every man present.

"Sorry to interrupt you, gentlemen," the voice said, "but reach for the skies—all of you and mighty fast!"

HOOK and the Banions raised their hands in the air, turning to face the speaker. He was leaning against a large boulder, his two six guns leveled at the mob. A scarf had been lifted to his mouth, but the forehead and gray eyes were visible.

And from what could be seen of the face, it was obvious that the masked man was no more than a mere boy, not more than twenty. His body was powerfully built; yet the mark of youth was on it.

"The 'Singin' Kid'!" Hook gasped in terror.

"You're right, Hook," came from the masked man.

A gasp of awe passed over the mob at the Kid's answer. He stood leaning against the boulder, his hands holding his two six guns easily, a mere boy facing a crowd of rugged Western fighters. Yet not one man in that group reached for his gun. They all knew they could get the Kid, but they also knew that many of them would get bullets through their hearts before this was done. And no one dared to take that chance.

The Singing Kid! For over a month this strange bandit had moved over that part of the West like a shadow of death, robbing stage coaches. Hook had put a reward of a thousand dollars on the head of this outlaw, but nobody had cared to try to collect that reward.

Face to face with the Singing Kid, who sang while he robbed stages, neither Hook nor his henchmen made any move to carry out their threat to get him. They stared at the guns in his hands and remembered the fantastic tales of their work.

"Mr. Porter," the Singing Kid said, "you and your men can get goin'. I just happened along to correct a little mistake. Hook has the cattle thieves on the wrong end of the ropes. Those three men on the horses should be tying ropes around Hook and Jake and Simon Banion. Get going, Porter."

Tim Porter and his men turned their horses away from the group and rode off without a word.

"Now, Hook," the Kid ordered, "untie those men on the horses."

Hook and the Banion brothers hastened to comply with the order and the three victims, as much dazed and bewildered at the appearance of the Singing Kid as Hook and his men, jumped to the ground.

On orders from the Kid they put the nooses around the necks of Hook and the Banions, with the ropes pulled so tight that the three men had to dance on their toes to keep from strangling.

"How about finishin' them, boss?" Curley said to the Kid.

"Not yet," the Kid answered. "I've got a score to settle with these three men."

The Kid slipped his guns in their holsters and walked up to Hook.

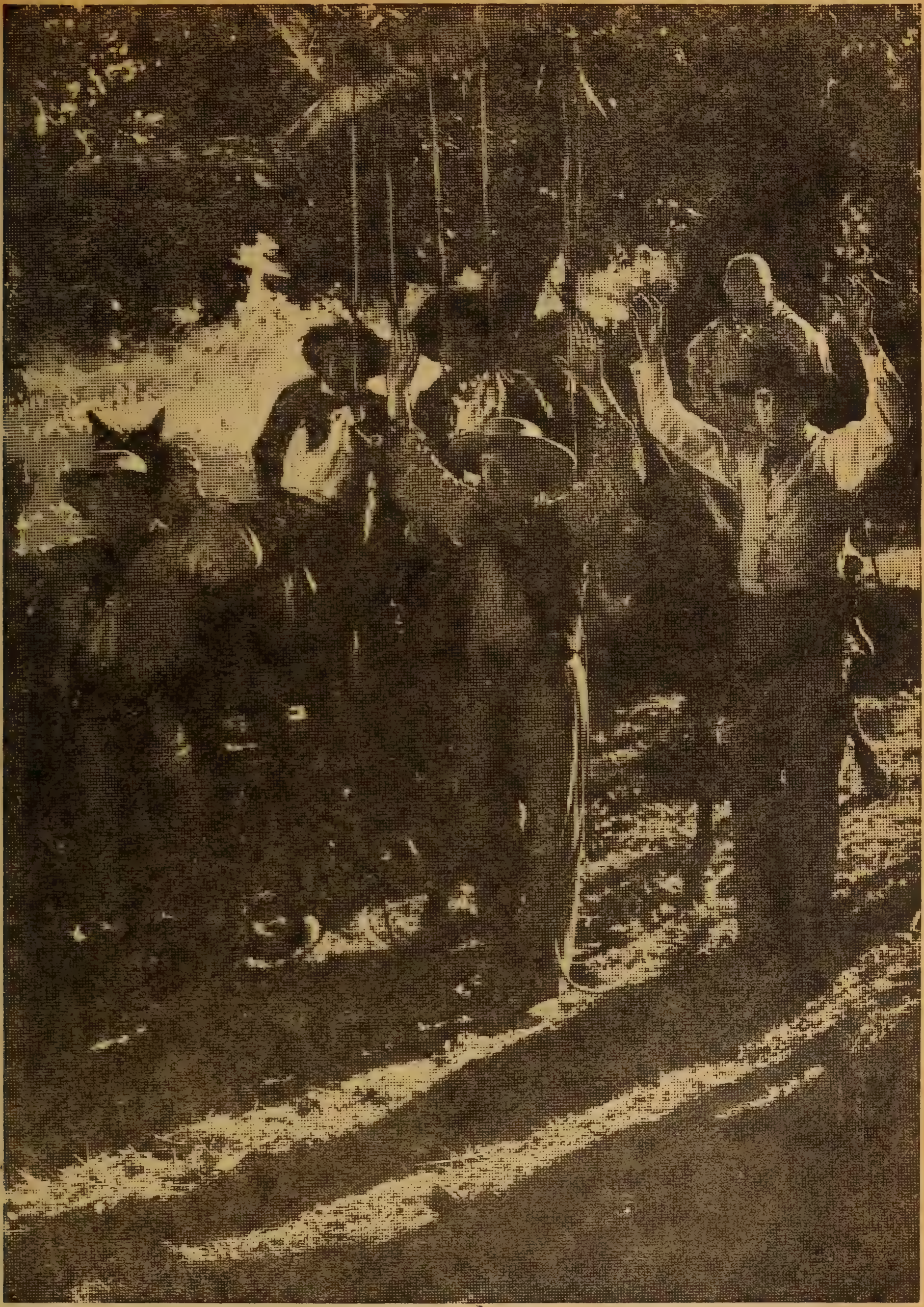
"Hook," he said in a quiet, tense voice, "I'm going to ask you to remember a night ten years ago. If you recall that evening, you will know why I have come to this country. Remember a trader and his son, named Wilson? You named that boy the Singing Kid."

The heavy face of Hook seemed to sag. His cheeks went a bloodless gray. His eyes stared at the boy in front of him, as a man might stare at a ghost.

"You murdered my father and stole his gold," the Kid went on. "You left me, a nine year old kid, to die on the desert. You posed as a respectable man then, as you do now—a banker and a trader. You and your two gunmen attacked our wagon dressed like Indians. But I saw your face! And I saw the faces of Jake and Simon Banion! I swore then, after I had buried my father, that I would come back and get you. And here I am!"

Phineas Hook trembled, Jake and Simon Banion cringed, as they saw the hands of the Kid drop to his guns, but the Kid smiled and shook his head.

"I'm no cold-blooded murderer," he said. "I don't shoot men in cold blood like you three do. I'm here to get you, but I'll get you in a different way. I'm



"The Singin' Kid!" Hook gasped in terror.

giving you a chance—something you never gave my father or me. But before I'm through you'll wish a hundred times that I had strung you up here!"

The Singing Kid turned and walked to the boulder behind which his pony was standing. Curley McCarver, Little Casino, and Jose Vaquez, the three he had saved, followed behind him.

"After what you done for us," Curley said to the Kid, "we'd like to do something for you."

"All right," the Kid answered. "Clear out of here before you get picked up by the Marshal. I can't use you—I ride alone."

"Maybe, if we didn't steal them cattle," Jose suggested, "we might help you get them back to Tim Porter and then we wouldn't have to look out for the Marshal."

The Singing Kid grinned at his three new-found friends and said: "Maybe we can find the cattle. Come on!"

TWO days later, Hook and the two Banions were seated in Hook's office. Their necks were tied up as though all three had sore throats. Their faces were dark and surly. Tim Porter entered the room, his rugged face all smiles.

"Hook," he said, "I dropped in to tell you of my good luck. This morning my boys heard some singing on the north side of the range. When they rode over they didn't see a soul, but there was my missin' herd grazin' just as though they had never been away."

Hook gave the Banions a quick look and gulped in bewilderment.

"Well, well," he managed to say, "that is good news. Sure glad to hear it."

"I thought you would be," Porter said and left the room.

Hook looked at the Banions and said almost in a whisper: "He heard singin', eh? And his cattle were brought back and laid right in his lap? I thought you said them cattle got stampeded out there in the canyon."

"The cattle did stampede," Jake growled. "How could a lone rider bring them cows back?"

"I don't care how he done it," Hook shot back. "But he done it. He's got me as jumpy as a loco bronc. Yesterday the stage was robbed again of six thousand dollars of my gold and today Porter says his cattle have come back."

"What you figgerin' he'll do next?" Simon asked.

"I ain't waitin' to see," Hook retorted. "He's got to come to town some time——"

"I ain't sure I'd know him if he did," Jake put in. "We never saw his face."

"I'd know him," Hook growled, "if I saw him."

The clerk from Hook's bank, which was in a front room, came to the door and motioned Hook to come to the bank. Hook walked out to the counter. A young man was standing there, a pleasant looking youth, holding an Express money order in his right hand.

Hook took the order, looked at the amount written on it, slightly amazed.

"Things must be pretty good for you, young man," he said. "What's your business?"

"Just now I'm adjusting things for my father," the youth answered. "Settling up a lot of old accounts."

"That's fine," Hook said, turning to the big safe and opening it.

The young man's eyes went to the wall. A large poster hung there, offering a thousand dollars reward for the capture of the Singing Kid.

"The Singing Kid," the customer said quietly. "From the price you're offering, I reckon you don't care much for his singing."

Hook stood up. "All I care about is putting a rope around his neck," he said bitterly.

"Speakin' about necks, what's the matter with yours?" the youth asked. "Got a sore throat? It's mighty catchin'!"

Hook flushed and gulped as the young man started for the door.

"Hope to see you again," Hook said with forced pleasantness.

"I got a feeling," the youth answered with an odd smile, "that you will—mighty soon."

"How about finishing them, boss?" . . . . "Not yet. I've got a score to settle with these men!"

THE Singing Kid walked out of Hook's bank with the roll of bills in his pocket, smiling to himself at the failure of Hook to recognize him. He had taken care that Hook wouldn't, however. His clothes were changed and the horse he was riding was no longer the paint pony used in his hold-ups. It was Smoke, the palmino horse that had carried him for two years.

The Singing Kid went directly to the home of Bill Corbun, an old friend of his father. Bill Corbun and his father had come West together. Corbun's daughter, Jen, was the Kid's age and together as children, they had ridden in the covered wagons across the desert. Ten years had passed since he had seen Jen or her father.

He found a barbecue in full force at the Corbun home. Jen was a young lady and she did not recognize the Singing Kid as the nine year old Wilson boy she had played with.

"It's been a long time since we came across the prairie, Jen," the Kid said, walking up to her. "I hope you haven't forgotten Frank Wilson——"

"Little Frankie!" Jen cried. "Why—why——"

Her father came up, looked at the Kid in amazement, remembering only the little Wilson boy of ten years before.

"But, Frank," Jen said, "what are you doing here?"

"I came back to settle a score with a man named Hook," the Kid replied. "He and the Banion brothers murdered my father and left me on the desert to die."

"Are you sure?" Bill Corbun demanded.

"Absolutely certain," the Kid replied. "I saw their faces." He laughed bitterly as his thoughts went back to the undimmed past. "I've been waiting ten years to settle this score," he added.

Further conversation was interrupted by the sight of a newcomer striding toward the group, his heavy face wearing a leering smile.

"Hello, Mr. Hook," Jen said, "won't you join us?"

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure," Hook sneered, "but I'm compelled to decline. I don't associate with road agents and outlaws."

"What do you mean?" Corbun demanded.

"This young man here can explain," Hook said. "I sorta thought I recognized him when he came into the bank, but as he walked away, he sang to himself, and Tim, my stage driver recognized that voice. This man here is the Singing Kid!"

HOOK'S gun came out covering the Kid. The two Banions came up at his rear, their guns stuck in his back.

"There must be some mistake," Jen protested, looking at the Kid. "Why, he's——"

"The most desperate outlaw that's been in these parts since we settled this country," Hook interrupted.

"It 'pears to me this is a job for the Marshal," Corbun said.

"It's a job that the boys will handle in their own way," Hook answered, "and it ain't for a man who has been shelterin' such a man as this to do any objectin'. You know what happens to men that harbor thieves."

The Kid looked at Corbun and grinned. Jake Banion had taken his guns from his belt and Simon Banion was shoving him toward the road.

"Looks like we'll have the right man on the rope this time, Kid," Hook said with a sneer.

"It's always nice to know you've got the right man," the Kid laughed.

And what happened next came with such speed that nobody knew exactly what did transpire. The Kid was on his horse Smoke, Hook was on a pinto pony at his side. Jake was getting in the saddle, while Simon was nonchalantly making a hangman's noose with his lariat.

The Kid's foot left the stirrup, went under Hook's stirruped foot, and the next second Hook was thrown out of the saddle on the ground. The Kid's right arm went out, closed around Jake's neck, pulling him off his horse across the Kid's saddle. Smoke leaped forward. The Kid ducked, throwing his body flat against the side of the horse, at the same time holding Jake across the saddle.

And before Hook could get off the ground or Simon his horse into action, Smoke had taken the Kid and Jake across a deep gully and down a ravine that led into the very heart of the badlands bordering on the Corbun ranch. Pursuit was hopeless!

TWO hours later the Singing Kid, with Jake tied across the front of his saddle, rode into his hide-out, miles away from Corbun Ranch. His three friends, Curley, Jose, and Little Casino, were seated around a fire. They jumped to their feet in amazement.

"What you bringing in here, boss?" Curley cried, seeing Jake across the saddle.

"Hook was going to hang me," the Kid answered, jumping to the ground. "I got away by using this killer as a shield."

"What are we going to do with him?" Jose demanded.

"We might cut off one of his ears to make him mad," Curley suggested.

"A noose around his neck," Little Casino put in, "might make him madder."

"We won't do either," the Kid said. "I'm not a killer. I'm going to let Hook

Hook's gun came out covering the Kid. The two Banions came up at his rear, their guns stuck in his back.

and Simon Banion do my killing. That's their business. Little Casino, I want you to ride into town and pass the word that the Singing Kid is camped on the north rim of Bark Canyon."

Little Casino was bewildered at the order. Nevertheless, he walked over to his horse, jumped in the saddle and rode away without a word.

"Curley," the Kid ordered, "you and Jose strip Jake's clothes off and tie him up. But tie him so he can get loose," he added softly, out of Jake's hearing.

Curley and Jose followed this order, and a few minutes later, Jake Banion was tied, his clothes stripped from his body. The Kid and his two companions rode away, leaving Jake alone in the deserted camp.

When the sound of the Kid's horse's hoofs died away, Jake twisted and pulled against the rope that held him. They were loose but it was not until hours later that he finally freed himself. The camp held a supply of clothes. He dressed in a pair of trousers and a dark shirt. He saw a paint pony standing under a tree. With a leap he was on it, racing for town!

BUT as Jake raced for town, Hook and Simon were coming up toward the rim of the dark canyon.

"I got men stationed all around here," Simon said to Hook. "If that report we got in town is right about the Singing Kid being up here, he won't get out alive."

"Look," Hook cried, "there he is coming toward us!"

Far in front of them, coming down the side of a barren hill was a horseman. Hook and Simon leaped from their ponies, scrambling for the cover of rocks. The horseman came closer.

"It's him," Hook cried. "It's his pony and he's wearing that black shirt."

Hardly had these words left Hook's mouth when his rifle cracked. The horseman stiffened, swayed in the saddle a moment, and then toppled to the ground.

"I got him," Hook cried, jumping to his feet and racing to where the horseman lay.

"He won't bother us any more," Simon cried, racing at Hook's side.

They came to where the man lay on the ground. Hook gave the lifeless body a vicious kick. It turned over on its back, eyes staring up at them.

"Suffering cats," Simon gasped. "It ain't him. It's Jake!"

Hook's face went a deathly white as he looked at Simon, and then the two shook their heads slowly and walked away.

The two men were gone and the first shades of night were dropping from the nearby mountains when the Singing Kid rode out of the shadows and up to where the dead man lay. The Kid got off his horse and stood over the body.

"Don't look up at me like that, Jake," the Kid said coldly to the dead man. "I didn't do it. Hook did! Killed you like he kills everybody—from a dry-gulch. Don't worry though, Jake—I'll get Simon and Hook like I'd wipe out two rattlers."

Then the Kid turned and leaped in his saddle and rode away.

THE following morning, Hook and Simon Banion entered the office of the United States Marshal in the Temple County Jail.

"We just got this!" Hook cried, tossing a paper on the Marshal's desk. The Singing Kid is coming to see me to-night at eight o'clock!"

The Marshal picked up the note and looked at it.

"Looks like you're going to catch up with him after all, Hook," he remarked dryly.

"Listen," Hook shouted, "I'm giving you orders to go out and——"

"Wait a minute," the Marshal cut in. "I take orders from only one person. Uncle Sam! Ever hear of him?"

"But it's your duty to protect citizens," Simon cried. "The Singing Kid murdered my brother Jake last night. He's fixin' to do the same to Phineas Hook tonight!"

The Marshal got up, shrugged, and said: "You seem to know more about this Singing Kid than I do. I'll go out and see if I can bring him in."

When night came, the Marshal hadn't been successful. Hook and Simon sat in Hook's office, with fear-stricken faces.

"We'll shoot the first man that crosses that front door," Hook said weakly. "We'll kill him before he has a chance to get us. What time is it?"

"Seven-thirty," Simon answered.

Hook got up and said: "I'm going into the other room where I can get a safe shot at him when he comes in the door."

Simon remained at the desk while Hook, giving way to his nerves, cowered in the rear room. Fifteen minutes until eight o'clock. Then ten! Then five! Only the grim silence of the night covered the outside of the office.

Simon got up and walked around the office. He had five minutes to wait for the Singing Kid, but it was going to be Hook's funeral. The Kid's note had said so. He thought grimly of the craven Hook behind his door, probably with his gun already aimed and waiting.

Then Simon stopped and stared at a man coming toward the office! It wasn't the Singing Kid, but the man's face was familiar. It was Curley McCarver. Boldly, he strode into the office!

"IS Hook still offering that thousand dollars for the Singing Kid?" Curley demanded.

"The reward is still good," Simon answered, "but what's your play? No trick or I'll drill you!"

"There ain't any trick if a man is tied hand and foot on a horse," Curley replied. "Take a squint out there and then run in and get a thousand dollars."

Simon looked up. Coming toward him, riding between Jose and Little Casino was the Singing Kid, hands and feet tied. Simon walked out to the three horsemen, looked the Kid over carefully, making sure there was no trick, and then said: "I'll go get Hook. He'll be mighty glad to see the Singing Kid and pay the reward."

Simon started for the door of the office. As he stepped inside, the clock began striking the ominius notes of eight o'clock. Too late, he remembered the tense and fear-wracked Hook stood behind the kitchen door waiting for the Singing Kid!

There were two thunderous roars. Simon reeled crazily in the doorway and then plunged head foremost to the floor. Hook stood paralyzed, his face still twisted with insane fury. He looked at the body of Simon on the floor in stunned silence, realizing at last that the threat against his life had been nothing but a clever plot to arrange Simon's death.

Then from somewhere outside came the voice of the Singing Kid, carrying the old familiar Western tune. The voice died away in the night.

One of Hook's henchmen came running into the room. Suddenly regaining his control, Hook turned on him and shouted: "Go get the Marshal! The Singing Kid just murdered Simon Banion!"

FAR out in the badlands, the Singing Kid, accompanied by his three friends stopped in the shelter of a wash gully.

"That," he said grimly, "is two of them. And now for Hook himself."

"What you want to do?" Jose asked. "We could ride into town and shoot him full of holes."

The Singing Kid shook his head.

"You don't have to be a killer to get killers," he said. "I'm getting Hook in a way he least expects—and in a way that's going to make him suffer more than death."

He paused for a moment. Then: "Get these instructions. The Wells Fargo Stage will be carrying fifteen thousand dollars in gold tomorrow. I want you to shadow that stage. But don't make any move to hold it up. Just watch it being held up."

"Who's going to hold up the stage?" Curley demanded.

"There'll likely be enough singing to make it look very much like the Singing Kid," the Kid replied. "After the hold-up, you ride into town to the Marshal's office."

"This sounds crazy to me," Little Casino growled. "I suppose you'll be waiting there for us."

"I'll likely be in jail," the Kid replied and then turned and rode away.

It was noon on the next day when the Singing Kid, riding Smoke, stopped in front of the Temple County Jail, jumped to the ground and stalked into the Marshal's office.

"I'm the Singing Kid," he announced. "I'm giving myself up!"

The Marshal gaped in amazement and said: "What's the idea?"

"I said," the Kid repeated, "that I'm giving myself up. You'll likely know the reason before the day is over."

"Well, if you're giving yourself up," the Marshal said, "I'll have to ask for your guns, but Corbun told me a few things about you and your Dad. I ain't encouraging anybody taking the law in his own hands, but I do know you wouldn't have much chance in this county against Hook in a Court if you charged him with murder of your father."

"I ain't a killer," the Kid said. "I didn't kill Jake or Simon Banion. And I haven't anything to do with what's going to happen to Hook, himself, this afternoon."

"What's happening to him?" the Marshal demanded.

"We'll just wait and see," the Singing Kid replied quietly.

OUT on a narrow mountain pass, the Wells Fargo Stage lumbered heavily over the stony road. The driver, watching the road carefully, suddenly yanked on the reins, bringing the stage to a stop. A tree lay across the trail in front of the stage.

As the stage stopped, three horsemen rode out from behind the rocks, six-guns blazing in their hands. The robbery was over quickly, with two of the guards being shot dead. And as the bandits rode away, the sound of a song broke over the sultry afternoon!

"The Singing Kid!" one of the passengers cried. "Get to the Marshal at Temple quick."

The tree was thrown out of the trail and the horses took the stage down the pass at top speed.

The robbery of the stage, and the brutal killing of the two guards, spread over the country-side like wild fire. The stage came lumbering into Temple carrying the news to the Marshal. Hook with five of his men raced up to the jail, demanding that action be taken at once.

The Marshal looked at him with a cold smile and asked: "What makes you think the Singing Kid did this job?"

"The passengers heard him singing," Hook cried.

"But it so happens," the Marshal said coldly, "that I have had the Singing Kid here in jail since two o'clock!"

"You have?" Hook thundered. "Well, I'm getting the boys together to string him up. I guess the whole town will take part in it now."

"Hardly," the Marshal said quietly. "The stage was robbed at four o'clock and the Singing Kid was right here then. Hook, I'm arresting you for the murder of those two guards and for holding up the Wells Fargo Stage. I got three men here as witnesses who saw you and your men do it!"

From another room, Curly and Jose and Little Casino, accompanied by the Singing Kid walked out in the room.

"Your game is up, Hook," the Singing Kid said. "You have been the man holding up the stages and using one of your men who could sing to make it look like I did it. I'll admit I did hold up one stage to get your gold in payment for the gold you took from my father—but the other hold-ups have been yours!"

HOOK'S gun came out with lightning speed. It roared, the bullet going through the Marshal's shoulder, sending him to the floor. The Singing Kid, unarmed, leaped after Hook as he went pell-mell through the door of the office, racing out across the dusty street.

The Temple Stage was standing near the wooden sidewalk, the driver being one of Hook's men. The driver lashed the horses and they leaped forward as Hook mounted the step to the driver's seat. But in the same moment the Singing Kid dove headlong for the stage, getting a hold of the two back springs.

He pulled himself up. Hook was standing on the roof of the careening stage! His gun roared in the Kid's face. Gun powder burned his eyes. Hook's gun roared again. There was a sharp pain in the Kid's side, but he lunged for Hook's legs, his arms closing around them.

The stage was out of town by this time, lumbering over the rocky road at a break neck speed. On the top of the stage, Hook and the Kid fought a grim fight of death. The wound in the Kid's side weakened him. Hook's right smashed in his face. His senses reeled but he hung on grimly.

Then, as the stage went around a dangerous curve, along the edge of a high cliff, the bull pin broke. The released horses ran away from the stage. It tottered on the edge of the cliff for a second and then turned over, crashing down the side into the lake at the bottom!

Head reeling crazily, the Kid knew he was falling through space. His arms were still around Hook's legs. The two hit the water and sank far under. Hook broke the Kid's grip and shot up to the surface.

The Kid came up less than a foot from him. Hook's huge hand shot out and smashed against the Kid's face. The Kid sank again, but he came up under Hook, his arms closing around Hook's legs for a second death grip!

The two went under, thrashing and fighting desperately. Hook's spur got caught in the Kid's legs. The two came up again. The Kid released his hold on Hook's legs. He summoned his last ounce of strength. His right went out in a paralyzing blow that caught Hook flush on the jaw.

Hook groaned weakly, threw his arms out feebly and then sank slowly from sight. The Kid swam shakily for the shore, to be met by the Marshal and Bill Corbun. Jen was coming down the cliff.

Out in the lake, Hook's hat floated idly on the water, but there was no sign of him. The Marshal and Corbun pulled the Kid from the water. He looked up at Corbun and smiled weakly.

"I guess," he said, "it's over now and I won't have to be the Singing Kid any more."

Jen came up to him. He looked at her and smiled.

"Do you remember, Jen," he said, "how we used to talk as kids about going to California? I wonder if it's too late to make that trip? There's gold out there and a chance for——"

"For a home," Jen put in quickly. Then she nodded. "I'll go with you, Frankie. I've been waiting ten years to make that trip."

The Kid smiled again—weakly.

"We'll start just as soon as my side feels better," he answered. "Maybe tomorrow?" He felt Jen's soft arm slide around his waist. He knew that even tomorrow would not be soon enough.

The JUNIOR ADVENTURER'S CORNER

COLUMBIA'S JUNIOR ADVENTURERS CLUB

Old Adventurer Says—"Meet Col. Johnson!"

HOW'S everything, Adventurer?

I heard from a couple of Junior Adventurers who rode up and said they wanted to hear from a boss cowman, if there was any such Honorary Adventurer. Well, that did my heart good, because just a day or so before, I'd been talking to one of the real old-timers—a man who's been riding range for almost fifty years now!

This man's not only an Honorary Adventurer and a good rancher. He's a darned good showman, too. If you've never seen a bucking bronc, if you've missed the thrill of watching hard riding and fancy roping, if—to make a long story short—you've never seen a rodeo, that's not Colonel W. T. Johnson's fault!

Because, every year, as soon as the heavy work on his three Texas ranches is done, Colonel Johnson rounds up his punchers. He sends out invitations to all the other first-rate cowhands in North America to join his show, too. He drives his wildest stock together and loads them on his special railroad cars. And, before you know it, Colonel Johnson's Rodeo is landing in your town with a whoop and a holler!

He takes six or seven hundred head of stock with him. He totes anywhere from a hundred and fifty to four hundred hands—which includes everybody from the helpers who look after feeding the stock, to Chet Byers who can make a lariat do things you can't even imagine! That's a big show. It's a big responsibility. And it calls for a big man at the head.

So that's where Honorary Adventurer Colonel Bill Johnson steps in. "Gosh," he said to me, "if anybody don't take your word for it, you tell 'em that my Daddy was a rancher before me down near San Antonio. Tell 'em I grew up on his ranches. Say to 'em that the only thing I ever did beside ranching—before I started this Rodeo, which was practically forced on me—was to be a banker.

"But tell 'em, too," he added, "that I was a cattle man's banker! Not one of these city fellers!"

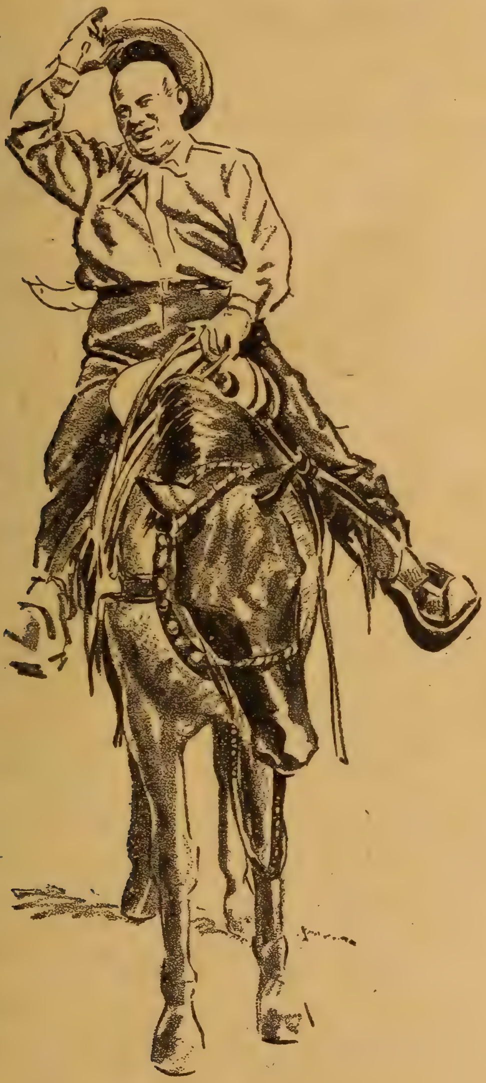
Well, that led to a lot of palaver back and forth. Before long, the Colonel and Old Adventurer were swapping yarns right and left. And we soon got to talking about how different it was riding range thirty and forty years ago.

The Colonel looked up at me with his mild-looking blue eyes. I felt a story coming on. And I was right!

"I'LL bet you remember the T-J Cattle Company, down in Texas," the Colonel said to me, ringing the bell right off! "Well, when I was a young shaver, I was their general manager. I was only 22 or 23 at the time. A young buck——

"So time came to drive some of our cattle up to Oklahoma. We had twenty—thirty thousand head all together, I suppose. So we were going to run a batch of them—thirty-five hundred, maybe—up north across the Red River on account of summer comin' on.

"I got my crew together—twelve or fourteen men, all told—and we cut out our herd one day. Then—— Say!" The Colonel let out a whoop loud enough to scare a couple of Longhorns across the arena. "Come on over here, Jim!" he yelled. And over trotted a cowhand with a white mustache that swept and flowed all over his ruddy face.



Colonel W. T. Johnson . . . Honorary Junior Adventurer . . . Owns and operates several ranches in central Texas. . . . And still has time and patience to put together a mammoth Rodeo every year. . . . Rides at least twenty miles a day, despite his sixty-odd years. . . . He'd rather break a good horse in himself than buy one used to a saddle. . . . Gets thrown frequently by bad horses. . . . Bounces right back again and masters his mount. . . . Has been riding range in Texas for over forty years. . . . "It's just about the same now as 'twas then," he says. . . . "Only difference is, you don't have to ride a horse to go places if you don't want to. . . . But, shucks, who don't want to?"

"This is Jim Chin," the Coloned said. "He was with me that day I'm talking about. One of my hands. When was it we drove that herd across the Red River, Jim?"

"'97, I reckon. Mebbe '98."

"Some fun, wasn't it?"

"I'll tell the world!"

"Well," the Colonel came back to the story, "nothing much happened 'till we got to the Red River. If you remember that country, you know that there ain't very much in the way of banks to keep the old stream where it belongs. It has a tendency, now and then, to sort of stretch out on both sides.

"Now, this drive I'm telling you about was one of those times. Spring was here. Snow was melting up in the mountains. It was all pouring down into the Red River, and what did the old Red River do but bust over, high wide and handsome! When we got to it, it was just about four miles across!"

"More like five," put in Jim Chin.

"Make it five," the Colonel agreed. "And the water coming down lickety-split. It was along about noon. Well, the first thing we did was take the wheels off the chuck wagon. We put them inside the wagon and chopped down a couple of trees. Made floats out of the logs. Stuck the wagon on 'em, and started out across!"

"Not all to once," Jim explained. "Just the Colonel, a couple of hands, and the chuck wagon."

"That was a hard pull!" the Colonel reminisced. "It was fight, fight, fight all the way. I was on the best horse in the outfit—always had good horses for myself—and it was pretty hard to make headway even then. Current was so swift, you see.

"One of the horses pulling the wagon suddenly gave out. I headed over to him, cut him out of harness, and let him swim for himself. He made it, finally. But I had to tie my horse in his place, so as we wouldn't lose the wagon. I stayed on his back, helping him along. Then, after we'd been in the water over two hours, I felt his feet drag on bottom. We were across!"

"And five miles downstream," Jim Chin put in. "That shows you how bad it was. Drifted down a foot for every foot they crossed."

"That's right," Colonel Johnson agreed. "So we had to ride back upstream before we went into the water. Never could have swum against the current. Finally, we anchored ourselves on a sand-bar in the middle of the stream and signaled the boys to start sending the cattle through.

"They cut out a bunch of a hundred or so and drove 'em into the water. At first, they shied off. But the boys—Jim was with 'em—started shooting and they stampeded them into the river. From then on, for the cattle, it was sink or swim. They swam!

"With every batch, one of the boys would swim behind 'em, and two down stream of 'em, hollering and whooping to scare them on. The first bunch got down to where I was, with three or four hands, and they took them on across from the bar to the far shore.

"Before long, I had my fourteen boys strung out in a diagonal line across the river, and the cattle kept coming along in a steady stream. A bunch would come near to one of the boys, and he'd start making an unholy racket and scare them on to the next fellow. That's the way we made it."

"AND that's all there is to the story?" I asked. Somehow, it didn't seem right to me.

"That's all," the Colonel nodded.

"Like fun, that's all!" Jim Chin exploded. "If you ain't goin' to tell about it, I will!" He turned to me. "I was about two hundred yards upstream of the Colonel when one of those crazy longhorns took it into his head to bust loose. Instead of swimming across, he came charging right down on me!

"I tried to shoo him back. Then I tried gettin' out of his way. I couldn't do either. He came crashing into the side of my pony. His horn hooked him right in the neck! The water was red with my horse's blood all of a sudden. He screamed, tried to rear up to fight back with his hoofs. I got thrown off into the water, and my pony swept on down stream.

"I saw that great big steer come bearin' down on me, and I was all set to say my prayers when I heard a shot—just one shot, mind you—and the critter gave a terrible jerk. Then he just collapsed, sort of, and drifted on down past me. As I turned around and started swimming for the sand-bar, I saw the Colonel slide his gun back into his holster.

"It was all in the day's work, he told me. But," here Jim Chin turned grateful eyes on the Colonel, "I got my own ideas about it."

Colonel Johnson looked a little sheepish. "Don't take it so personal, Jim," he mumbled. "Maybe I knew I was going to need you one day for top hand in my Rodeo. You can't tell——"

So that's the Colonel's contribution to our series of true adventure tales, told by distinguished Honorary Adventurers. Welcome to our columns, Colonel! We'll be waiting for you to come out of winter headquarters and bring that show of yours around again, soon!

NOW, getting down to the business part of this meeting, how is your club coming on? Have you formed your platoon? We're here to help you elect your officers, and to suggest ways and means of keeping your platoon busy doing real and important things.

If you're waiting for more members in your locality, why don't you tell your friends to cut the membership application coupon out of their copies of MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE and have them send htem in right away? That will solve the problem for you.

Then, after you get your platoon formed, and have your secretary picked out, maybe you'll write Old Adventurer and tell him what you're doing and how you're getting on.

How about it?

Old Adventurer

COLUMBIA'S JUNIOR ADVENTURERS CLUB

Movie Action Magazine Squadron, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City

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I hereby apply for membership in Columbia's JUNIOR ADVENTURERS CLUB, and agree to obey all RULES AND REGULATIONS, and PLEDGE myself to keep the CLUB LAWS, which are as follows:

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8. Cheerful in Work and Play.
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THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 109

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, with Ronald Colman, Donald Woods, Elizabeth Allen, Edna May Oliver, and Reginald Owen.

It is a pleasure to report that here, again, is good lusty drama taken from the classics. Charles Dickens wrote of the French Revolution many years ago, telling the exciting tale of the falsely accused Charles Darnay and the self-sacrificing ne-er-do-well, Sidney Carton. Ronald Colman brings Sidney Carton to life again—makes him live and breathe, and dash heroically through the riot and tumult of the bloodiest revolt in history—until he loses his head on the guillotine, successfully masquerading until the last as the *fiancé* of the girl he himself loves. As the martyred friend of justice, Ronald Colman has never been better. The story, the cast, and the production are all equal to his great performance.

ROMANCE—THRILLS—LAUGHTER—TEARS—THEY'RE ALL THERE. A PERFECT COMBINATION OF ALL THE BEST ELEMENTS OF GREAT ENTERTAINMENT.

AND DON'T FORGET . . .

We liked these before. We still like them, and so should you.

THE CRUSADES—C. B. DeMille's latest spectacle.
THE DARK ANGEL—Starring Frederick March in a War picture.
DR. SOCRATES—Paul Muni as a gang-busting doctor.
SHE MARRIED HER BOSS—Swell comedy with Claudette Colbert.
HARMONY LANE—Sweet and stirring. Not a musical.
SHE COULDN'T TAKE IT—George Raft in a spicy comedy.
SPECIAL AGENT—A different G-Man Story.
TOP HAT—If you like Astaire and Rogers, it's the tops.
THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII—Vesuvius rains death.
CAMERA THRILLS—The most violent news pictures ever filmed.
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM—Shakespeare for everybody.
THE GREAT IMPERSONATION—International intrigue and spies.
THE THREE MUSKETEERS—Introducing Walter Abel in the classic.
REMEMBER LAST NIGHT?—A tricky mystery, and well done.
A NIGHT AT THE OPERA—The Marx Brothers at their best!
CAPTAIN BLOOD—Sabatini's fiery story helps a new star.
TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL—Richard Dix digs it.
ANNIE OAKLEY—An echo from the days of Buffalo Bill.
STORM OVER THE ANDES—Jack Holt, airplanes, and war.

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JACK HOLT'S latest:

"Dangerous Waters"

VICTOR JORY'S thriller:

"Too Tough To Kill"

DONALD WOODS' newest:

"Prison Farm"

JOHN WAYNE'S coming:

"Lawless Range"

and

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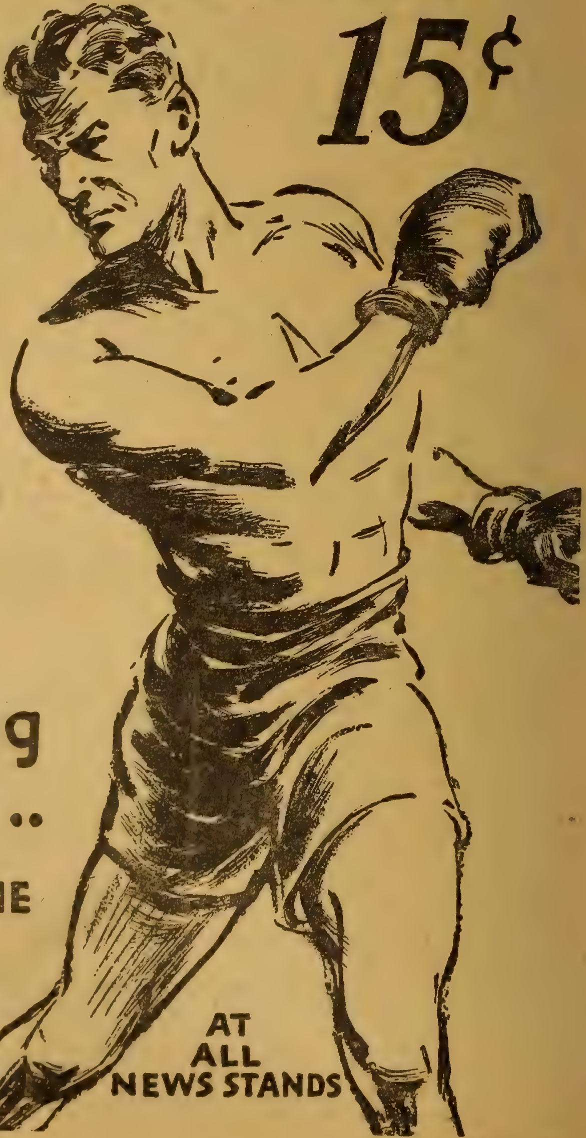
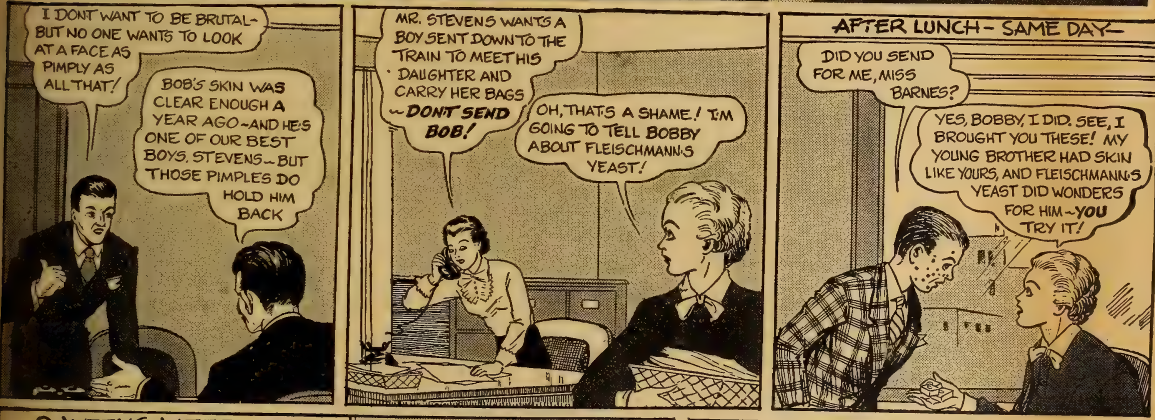
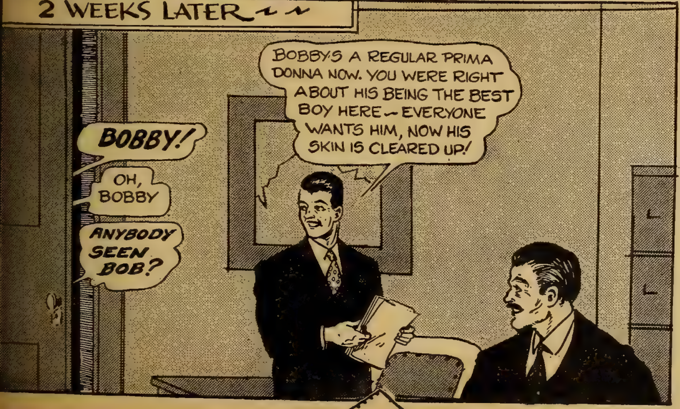
AT ALL NEWS STANDS

MA—8



"Did we *have* to hire a boy with a Skin like *that*?"


I DONT WANT TO BE BRUTAL- BUT NO ONE WANTS TO LOOK AT A FACE AS PIMPLY AS ALL THAT!
BOB'S SKIN WAS CLEAR ENOUGH A YEAR AGO~AND HE'S ONE OF OUR BEST BOYS, STEVENS~BUT THOSE PIMPLES DO HOLD HIM BACK
MR. STEVENS WANTS A BOY SENT DOWN TO THE TRAIN TO MEET HIS DAUGHTER AND CARRY HER BAGS ~DON'T SEND BOB!
OH, THAT'S A SHAME! I'M GOING TO TELL BOBBY ABOUT FLEISCHMANN'S YEAST!
AFTER LUNCH - SAME DAY
DID YOU SEND FOR ME, MISS BARNES?
YES, BOBBY, I DID. SEE, I BROUGHT YOU THESE! MY YOUNG BROTHER HAD SKIN LIKE YOURS, AND FLEISCHMANN'S YEAST DID WONDERS FOR HIM~YOU TRY IT!


2 WEEKS LATER
BOBBY'S A REGULAR PRIMA DONNA NOW. YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT HIS BEING THE BEST BOY HERE~EVERYONE WANTS HIM, NOW HIS SKIN IS CLEARED UP!
BOBBY!
OH, BOBBY
ANYBODY SEEN BOB?

Don't let adolescent pimples keep YOU from getting ahead!

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FEBRUARY
1936

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Complete stories of coming picture
starring Jack Holt and Ken Maynar
and other feature dramatizations.

How Movie Cartoons are made.

error thunders
rough the tunnel!

TOO TOUGH TO KILL

Daring Dramatization!

Wouldn't you like to get thru the winter *without* *CATCHING COLD?*

Your chances of doing so are better if you will treat a cold for what it is — an infection calling for germicidal action

SOMETHING new is going on—something that will interest you if you are subject to colds and sore throat.

People who used to catch colds and dose them vainly, now take steps to fight having them at all. They have stopped planning to cure, and have begun trying to prevent these troublesome and often dangerous ailments.

Today, colds stand revealed in their true light. They are no more nor less than infections, involving germs. The way to treat such infections is with germicidal action which destroys bacteria.

We ask you to read carefully the results of several tests, made under medical supervision, during the winters of 1930-1931, 1931-1932, and 1934.

During these years, large groups of people were divided into two classes: those who gargled with Listerine twice a day or oftener, and those who did not gargle at all.

In a majority of tests it was shown that those who gargled with Listerine caught fewer colds than those who did not gargle with it. Moreover, when Listerine users did catch cold, the colds were milder, and were of shorter duration, than the infections of non-users.

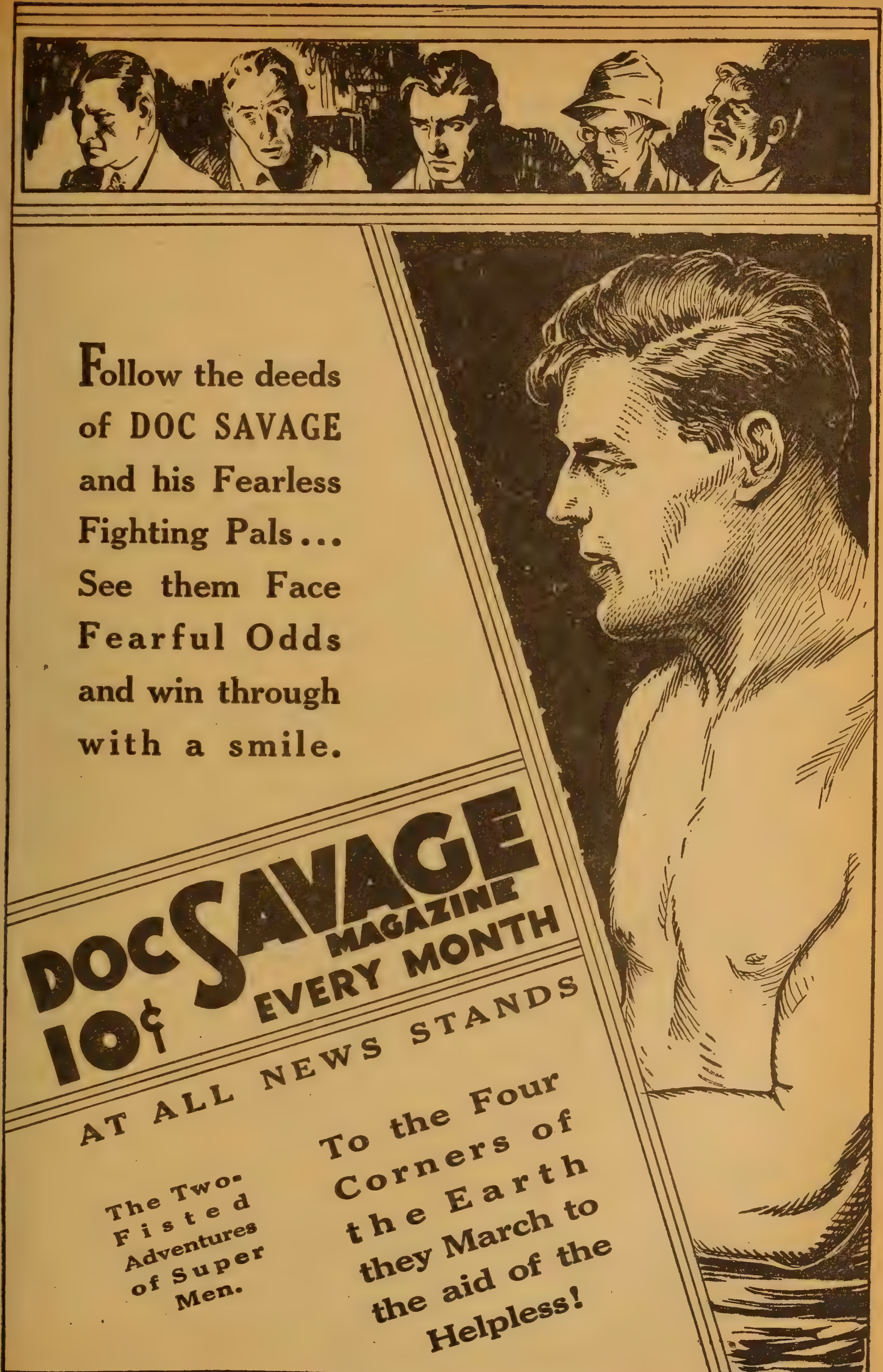
Against sore throat Listerine was similarly successful—fewer cases for those who used it.

Bear in mind that these results did not spring out of one test made during one year but out of many tests made during several years. Thus does science lend corroboration to the testimony of literally thousands of satisfied Listerine users who have found this safe antiseptic so helpful in checking respiratory infections.

Don't wait till a cold takes hold of you, and you are forced to dose it with internal drugs of questionable effect. Get in the habit of using Listerine twice a day as a preventive measure. Listerine not only kills germs associated with sore throat and colds, on the mucous membrane of the oral cavity, but also renders the mouth clean and sweet and the breath agreeable. Lambert Pharmacal Company, St. Louis, Mo.

Listerine

— relieves Colds and Sore Throat



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Those we liked best lately—and why.

Monthly publication issued by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y. George C. Smith, Jr., President; Ormond V. Gould, Vice President and Treasurer; Artemas Holmes, Vice President and Secretary; Clarence C. Vernam, Vice President. Copyright, 1936, by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., New York. Copyright, 1936, by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., Great Britain. Subscriptions to Cuba, Dom. Republic, Haiti, Spain, Central and South American Countries except The Guianas and British Honduras, $1.25 per year. To all other Foreign Countries, including The Guianas and British Honduras, $1.70 per year.

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The Movie Round-up

THE INVISIBLE RAY

A Universal picture with Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, Frances Drake, and Frank Lawton.

(See the January MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE for the full fictionized story of this picture.)

The greatest scientific mind in the world becomes infected with the Radium X which he has discovered—and goes mad! This is a great rôle for Boris Karloff, giving him another chance for one of his weird make-ups since Radium X causes him to glow like a hot iron in the dark. It is a great dramatic possibility, too, because—infected with Radium X—his slightest touch while he glows means instant death! There are many spectacular scenes in THE INVISIBLE RAY such as the pit which Karloff descends to obtain this unknown element, and his reproduction on the domed ceiling of his great laboratory of events that occurred millions of years ago.

KARLOFF'S BEST SINCE "FRANKENSTEIN."

THE LONE WOLF RETURNS

A Columbia picture with Melvyn Douglas, Gail Patrick, Raymond Walburn, and Arthur Hohl.

(See the January MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE for the full fictionized story of this picture.)

Adapted from one of the late Joseph Louis Vance's best known novels, this crook story is about the slickest thing that has come along in many months. It's about the Lone Wolf—who is brought to life vividly by the up-and-coming Melvyn Douglas—and his efforts to prevent the robbery of a girl he happens to love. After she is robbed in spite of him, he finds it impossible to convince the police he didn't do it, so he has to escape and catch the crooks, himself. Smooth mysteries of this type belong in a class by themselves, and Columbia and Mister Douglas have done right by this one.

THIS IS, WITHOUT A DOUBT, THE YEAR'S BEST MYSTERY MOVIE!

TWO FACES

A Radio picture with Brian Donlevy, Wallace Ford, Molly Lamont, Erik Rhodes, and Alan Hale.

Hollywood is having fun at its own expense again. Here is the story of a tough gangster who gets his face made handsome by a plastic surgery operation, and then becomes a movie star! Wallace Ford, playing the part of a publicity man, is all set to "build him up" in a nation-wide campaign when he discovers who the new star really is. TWO FACES is a fast paced, tensely drawn comedy from that moment on.

YOU'LL BE SORRY IF YOU MISS THIS ONE. IT'S LAUGHTER LOADED WITH DYNAMITE!

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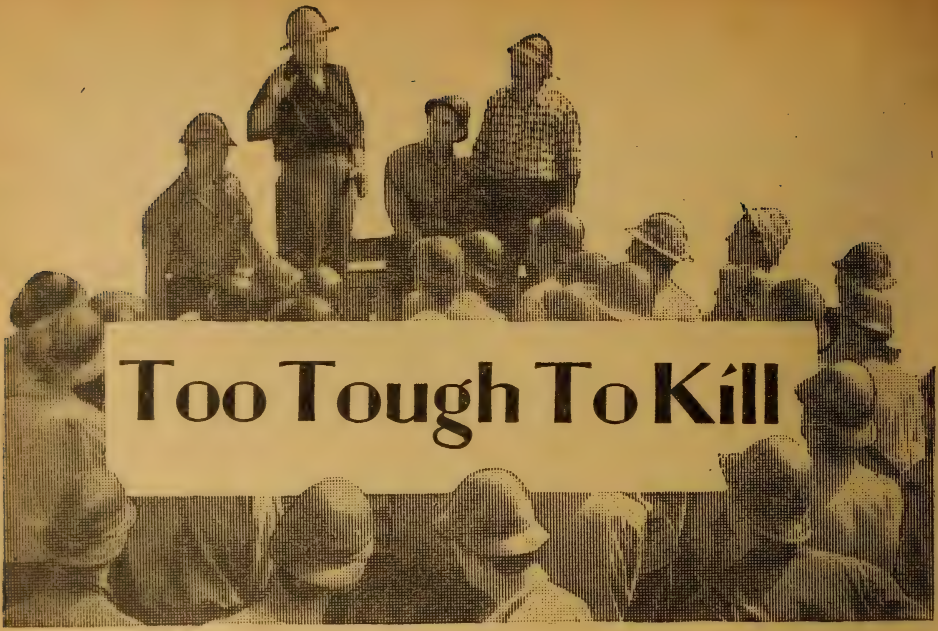


Too Tough To Kill

He measured strength by steel, hardness by granite, and work by results. But he had no standards for fear!

CRAGGY mountains frowned down without benediction upon the sun-parched valley that gave unwilling shelter to the Whitney construction camp. Across the mountains, three hundred and fifty miles away, Los Angeles, fair and green and thirsty, awaited the precious crystal flood of water that would some day pour down from these forbidding mountains through the Whitney Tunnel.

Today, burning dust rose in a slow cloud from the feet of men shuffling toward the tunnel portal. A snubnosed battery-powered locomotive rattled across the wooden trestle that spanned the canyon, dragging behind it a long line of empty muck cars.

Idly talking, the shift going on duty clambered up onto the cars. Hard-bitten, dusty, like the country they battled, these men wore dusty dungarees and shiny trench helmets. Their naked,

THE CAST

VICTOR JORY	John O'Hara
SALLY O'NEILL	Ann Miller
Ward Bond	Danny
Robert Gleckler	Anderson
George McKay	Nick
Johnny Arthur	Willie

Directed by D. Ross Lederman
From the story by Robert D. Speers
Screenplay by Lester Cole and J. Griffin

A Fictionization of the Columbia Picture of the same title.

muscle-knotted backs shone with sweat in the blazing sun.

Unnoticed, John O'Hara swung up onto the last car as the locomotive moved inside the tunnel. He wore city clothes, but his face was bronzed and hard and his great height was matched by an impressive width of shoulder.

As the train penetrated the rocky heart of the mountain, O'Hara looked about him with a keen scrutiny that carried more than curiosity. Gradually they entered a deafening din. Great lights flooded the face of the rock where jackhammers pounded relentlessly. Gleaming with sweat, the bodies of the drillers bent over the stuttering steel drills, and the bodies of the muckers bent over the shovels with which they cleared the rocky rubble that fell before the drills and hose lines. Fed by the moving shovels, a great scoop bit, swung, lifted, spewed out its gigantic bite into the waiting muck cars and descended with a roar to be fed again.

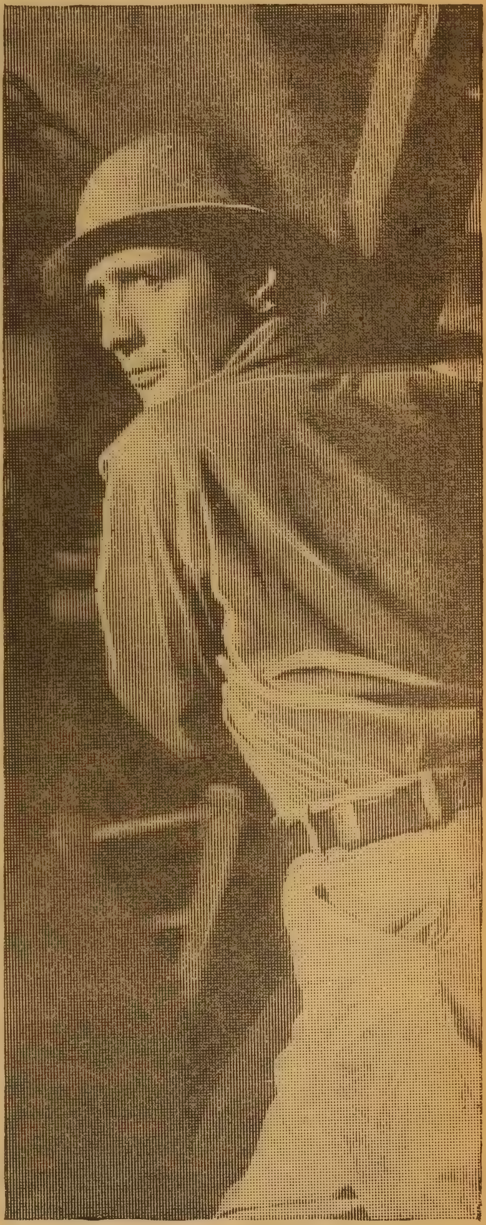
AS the train bearing the new shift drew up to the rock face and stopped, O'Hara saw a man jump down from a car and run toward the workmen. On the high drill carriage stood a tremendous man, whose pantomimed directions told O'Hara he must be the foreman.

The man from the train motioned urgently that he wanted to speak to the foreman and the big man nodded. He looked around at the air-valve tender. Tony, a small, dark, foreign-looking man, had his back turned. The foreman shouted. In the clamorous din of the tunnel, his voice was unheard. He yelled again, his face ugly with quick, unreasoning rage. Rapidly he scrambled down from the high drill carriage and strode stumblingly over the rough stone.

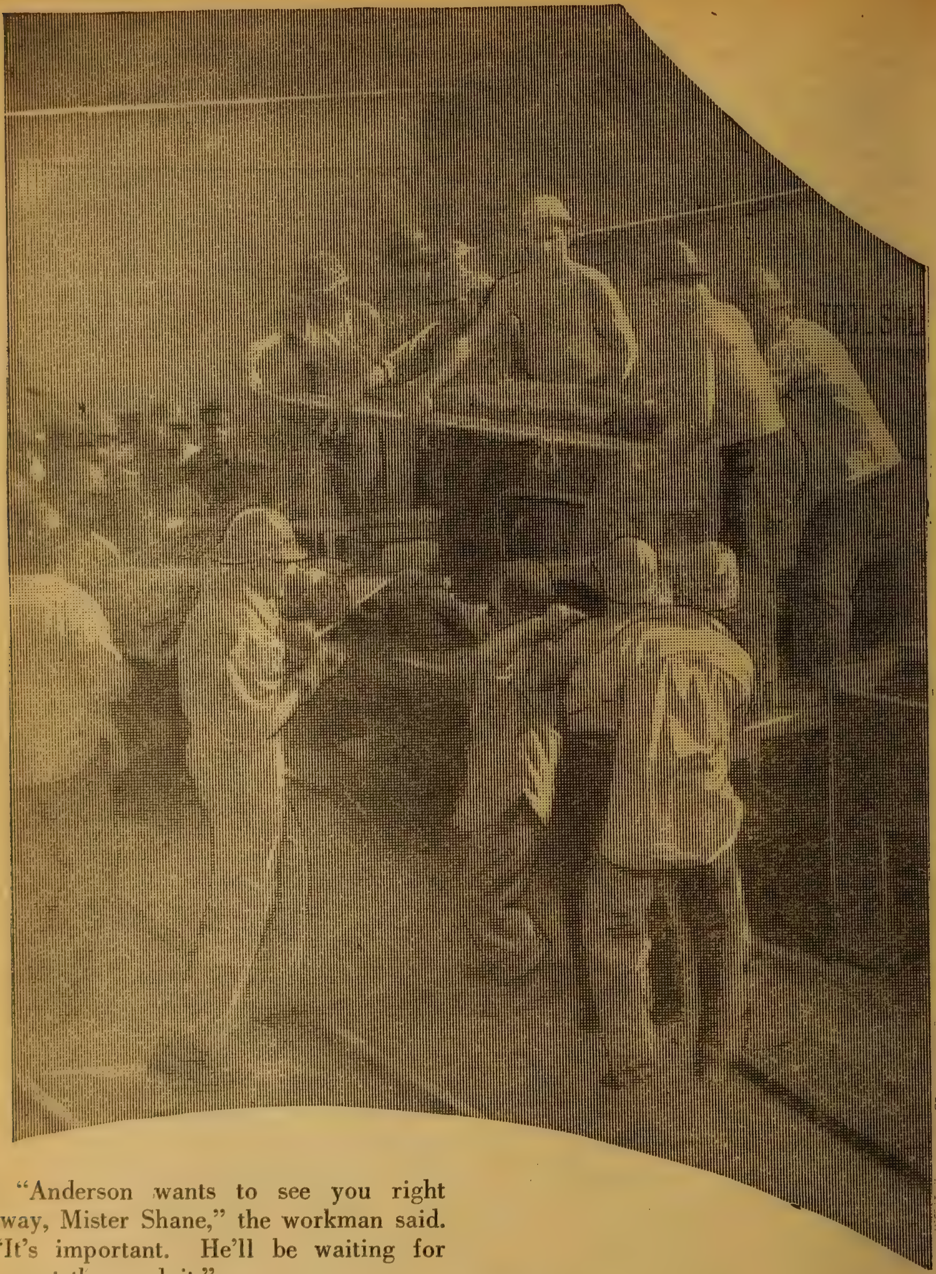
The little man's back was still turned. The foreman's big hand struck his shoulder with a force that hurled him headlong into the jagged rock wall.

Without a glance at Tony, the foreman bent and turned the valve of the airline. As the air slacked, silence fell achingly on O'Hara's eardrums and he heard the big man shout:

"Now, what's eating you?"



John O'Hara, driver of men, builder of tunnels.



"Anderson wants to see you right away, Mister Shane," the workman said. "It's important. He'll be waiting for you at the conduit."

"All right," Shane said brusquely, and bent to turn on the air again. The little tender stumbled dazedly toward him, wiping away a trickle of blood from his mouth. O'Hara got down from the train and started forward.

"Why you push?" the little man asked. "What happen?"

Shane straightened and stared at him disgustedly. "When I give an order, pay attention."

"No can hear with drills going."

Shane frowned. "Next time, keep your eyes on me," he said in a tone of terse dismissal.

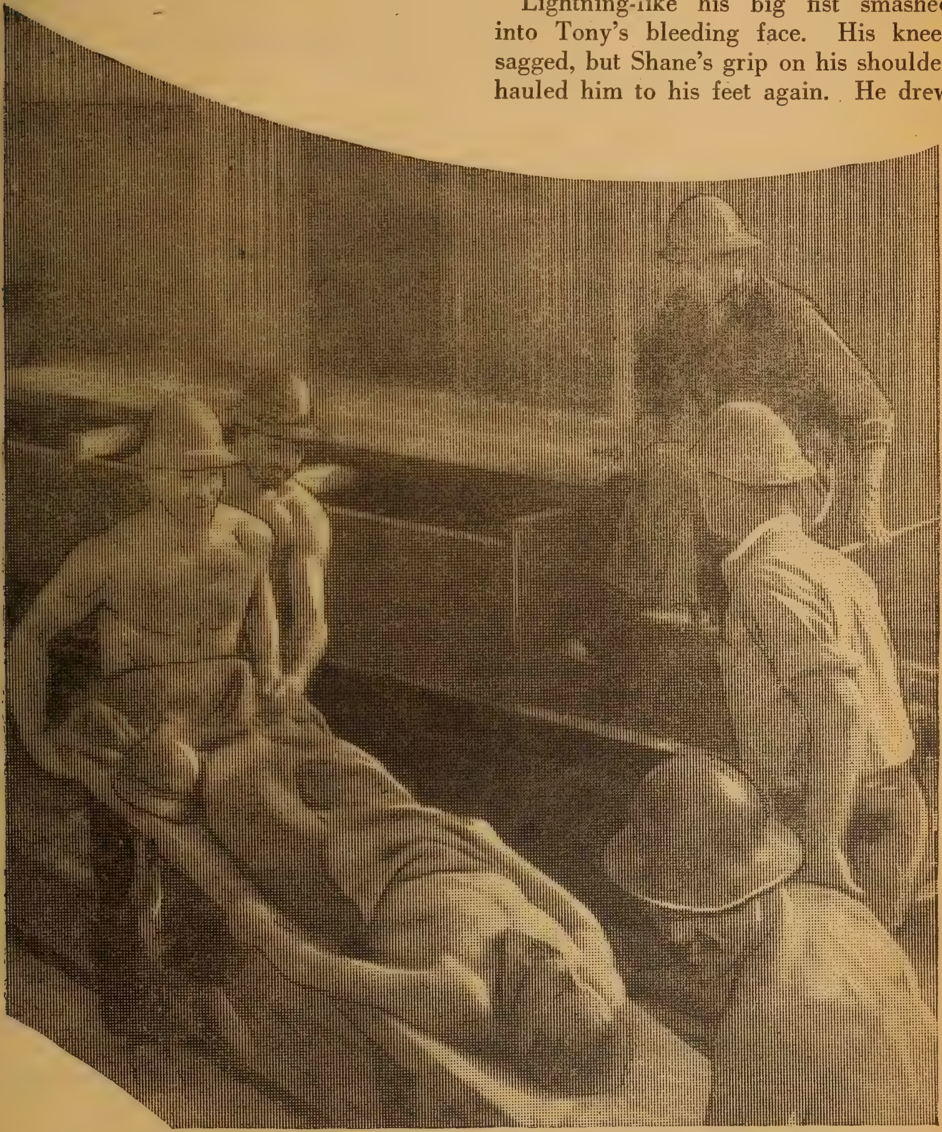
The valve-man's bleeding mouth tightened grimly. "Next time no push!" he said determinedly.

Shane stared at him in surprise. "Say," he demanded, "are you telling me what to do?"

"Just no push, that's all."

The foreman glanced quickly around the circle of watching faces. They were stony, glaring. With a swift gesture he spun the small man around by the shoulder. "Nobody gives me any lip around here," he shouted. "Understand? Next time, you open your eyes and keep them on *me!*"

Lightning-like his big fist smashed into Tony's bleeding face. His knees sagged, but Shane's grip on his shoulder hauled him to his feet again. He drew



He made an eloquent gesture to the stretcher bearers, and jumped down from the locomotive.

his arm back, ready for another blow at the already unconscious face. Then he paused, surprised, as he saw O'Hara's big bulk coming toward him.

O'HARA examined Shane curiously. "Why don't you just kick him," he suggested coldly, "and save your hands?"

With a sharp breath of fury Shane straightened, dropping the tender like a bag of meal.

"Visitors ain't allowed in here."

"You sure of that?" O'Hara's eyes were as cold as his voice.

"Yeah! Now beat it!"

"Maybe if I were as small as he is, you could *put* me out," O'Hara offered.

"Maybe I can put you out anyway," Shane snarled. He lunged forward into a straight left that brought him straight up on his heels.

"Maybe," he heard O'Hara say coolly.

Again Shane lunged, though a little more carefully. He was bigger, heavier. He should have no trouble with this fresh guy.

But though he could bloody O'Hara's face and back him into the tunnel wall, he couldn't really get to him—and he couldn't get out of the way of those lefts that came crashing straight at him to snap his head back on its thick neck.

Three times he ran into that terrific impact; for a second his guard went down, and in that instant O'Hara crossed a right to him that dropped him without a stagger.

O'Hara dropped his bleeding hands and breathed deeply. Slowly he looked around the intent, watching circle of faces. His eyes and voice were calm when he spoke—calm and hard.

"My name's O'Hara," he told them. "I'm the new boss around here. When this shifter comes to, tell him I said he's through—to get his pay and get out of camp."

He turned away from them, brushing dirt off his clothes. Shane was still motionless, but the little valve tender had come to and scrambled to his feet.

"Meester," he began gratefully, "I thank——"

O'Hara interrupted brusquely. "Do you run the air?"

"Sure," the man said eagerly.

"Well, run it," said O'Hara.

Almost instantly, the place was filled again with the din of the jackhammers. As if the air had just been turned into them, too, the men moved swiftly, taking their places, clambering onto the loaded train.

O'HARA rode out with them, thinking hard. He grinned a little to himself. Interesting beginning for a tough job. But if he was going to get this section of tunnel completed in time, he couldn't be held back by foremen who got nothing but antagonism from their workmen.

In his shack, he changed into khaki trousers and blue work shirt, and walked through the blazing heat of the yard to the rough frame building which apparently served as an office. No one was there. He looked about for a while, occupying himself with maps of the workings, and plans of various sorts.

When he went out, he came face to face with a tall man who greeted him pleasantly.

"Mister O'Hara?" he asked. "My name's Anderson. Sorry to have missed you when you arrived. Didn't expect you until tomorrow."

O'Hara grinned as he took the man's extended hand. "That's all right," he said. There was a touch of too much steel about this man's mouth, he thought, to go with such a friendly tone.

"I heard about the Shane episode," Anderson said. "You don't mind my saying something?"

"Shoot."

"Well, from what I hear," Anderson went on in a placating tone, "he had it coming to him all right, but he's a valuable tunnel man. They're scarce around here."

O'Hara shook his head. "He wouldn't do me much good," he said firmly. "I'd probably have him in the hospital most of the time."

Anderson grinned and apparently dismissed the subject. "Would you care to look around the office?" he asked.

"I don't work in an office," O'Hara told him matter-of-factly. "Let's see how the wheels go round—or why they don't."

He caught the man's guarded look.

"Sure," Anderson said, and started across the yard.

THE camp foundry was deserted. No fire burned in the forge; the two anvils the place held were dusty. O'Hara looked about curiously.

"Why isn't this place running?" he asked.

"Not enough work to keep a crew on."

"Sounds impossible," O'Hara said, almost to himself. From the rough bench he picked up one of the long, heavy drill steels which lay there.

"Are these the drill steels they're using?" he asked, after he had looked the tool over carefully.

Anderson nodded.

"This steel is full of flaws," O'Hara declared. "They're seconds! Doesn't this stuff crack under the heat?"

Anderson shrugged. "That's why the

"Two men killed, three injured . . . and all you're worried about is a story! Is that what newspapers do to a woman?"

place isn't working. No use in sharpening 'em."

"No wonder you're only driving two feet a shift instead of eight!" the new boss of the Whitney Tunnel said thoughtfully, and directed a keen glance at Anderson. "Haven't you reported this?"

"Nobody would listen to me. Maybe you can do something about it."

O'Hara stared at him, wondering if he heard a shade of defiance behind the man's civil, friendly tone. "Maybe I *will* do something about it," he said.

He laid down the drill steel, and together they went out toward the tunnel entrance and climbed aboard one of the small locomotives. Anderson drove, and O'Hara looked carefully about as they proceeded through the huge man-made cavern.

"What's that?" he shouted suddenly, looking up.

"That's where we had the cave-in, last March. Bad ground gave way without warning, but this new steel liner plate seems to be holding it all right." His eyes were carefully on O'Hara as he spoke, but the new boss merely nodded, and they went on.

Presently he motioned Anderson to stop, and jumped off the car to walk over to the side of the tunnel. Here the tunnel walls were braced with wooden timbers instead of the steel liner. O'Hara was staring up with narrowed eyes at one of the huge timbers. The tough fiber was cracked jaggedly across and beginning to twist as it bent outward. He looked back curiously at Anderson.

"Who does the inspecting around here?" he asked.

It seemed to him that the other man hesitated a fraction of a second before he answered: "Swede Mulhoussen, a good man. Why?"

O'Hara pointed up at the timber, and came back to the locomotive.

"Get a new inspector," he said tersely. "The ground's been swelling here for a month from the looks of it. If he can't see it in that time, he'll never see it until there's another cave-in."

"He's been pretty busy," Anderson evaded. "Why don't you talk to him?"

"I will!" said O'Hara grimly.

THEY went on in silence to the workings. A new crew was on. They climbed down, and Anderson tapped the valve tender on the shoulder. As the air in the drills died, the men turned.

"This is Mister O'Hara, the new engineer," Anderson said in the heavy silence. "He's got a few words to say."

O'Hara looked around the place. The men stared back at him, impassive, attentive. "Making speeches isn't my business," he began easily, "and I don't intend to go through this routine with the other two shifts. So what I say can be passed on by you boys to the others." He paused a moment, his face tightening a little.

"There's a lot of bunk being spread about that this is a hoodoo section, a jinx camp," he said forcefully, but quietly. "Well, I don't believe in jinxes or hoodoos. When accidents happen on a job like this, there's only one reason for it—negligence! Somebody's lying down on the job. From now on that's over. You either work and work hard, or get out. This section is months behind schedule, and we're going to make up that time. I don't expect the impossible. I won't ask any man to do what I won't do myself. But between us, we're going to lick this job!"

He paused, and there was a sudden spurt of involuntary laughter.

"Like you did Dave Shane?" a driller grinned.

O'Hara stared at him. It hadn't taken long for that story to get around. A faint grin touched his mouth. "Something like that," he told the man. He turned to Anderson. "Where's that inspector—Swede Mulhoussen?"

"Swede!" Anderson yelled. "Swede Mulhoussen!"

Slowly a gigantic man with a sullen face lumbered forward.

Friendliness faded from O'Hara's face and voice.

"There's a timber segment down the line about a quarter of a mile that's ready to crack," he said sharply. "Looks as if it's been that way for a month. If I find anything like that around here again, you're through! Get it fixed!"

Perhaps that burst of light . . . would make O'Hara stop.

The man returned his hard gaze for a moment, then his eyes dropped.

"All right, Chief," he said slowly.

THAT night, despite his remark to Anderson, O'Hara worked long in the heat of the shack-like office. His face was grim, and when he had finished writing a long letter to the company office in Los Angeles, he sat quite still.

Apparently this was a real man's job he'd taken on. Jinx or no jinx, something was holding back the tunnel's progress and it was up to him to find out what.

He went over the whole matter in his mind, going back to the day in Los Angeles when he had been given the job. He saw again the relief map, and the inexorable pointer: Parker Dam—completed, at a cost of millions. Three hundred and fifty miles of conduit and canal—completed, ready for use. Billions of gallons of water waiting, ready to be pumped through the pipes. And then the Whitney Tunnel—eighteen miles—holding up the whole project!

John O'Hara's jaw tightened. The whole project was Jim Whitney's. He'd put his ideas, his money, his life in it, and if it wasn't finished within the stipulated time, he would have to sacrifice it all; the contract would be turned over to the next lowest bidder. He had presented John O'Hara to the Board as his last hope. If O'Hara couldn't finish the tunnel, nobody could.

And now O'Hara was beginning to have an idea of what he was up against: negligence, inferior materials, neglected and broken-down machinery. It might take a long time to straighten things out and get them to running smoothly, and he didn't have a long time.

O'Hara sighed and went to bed.

Next morning, after a man had set out for Los Angeles in a Ford with his letter, O'Hara got Anderson to accompany him on an inspection of the work going on outside the tunnel.

All other portions of the aqueduct had been finished. It was only the Whitney Tunnel section that dragged slowly on, beset by accident after accident. It was a thorough inspection. Early afternoon found O'Hara carefully going over every part of a huge dragline shovel being used on the job. When he finished, he was dripping wet and grimy with oil and dust—and thoroughly angry.

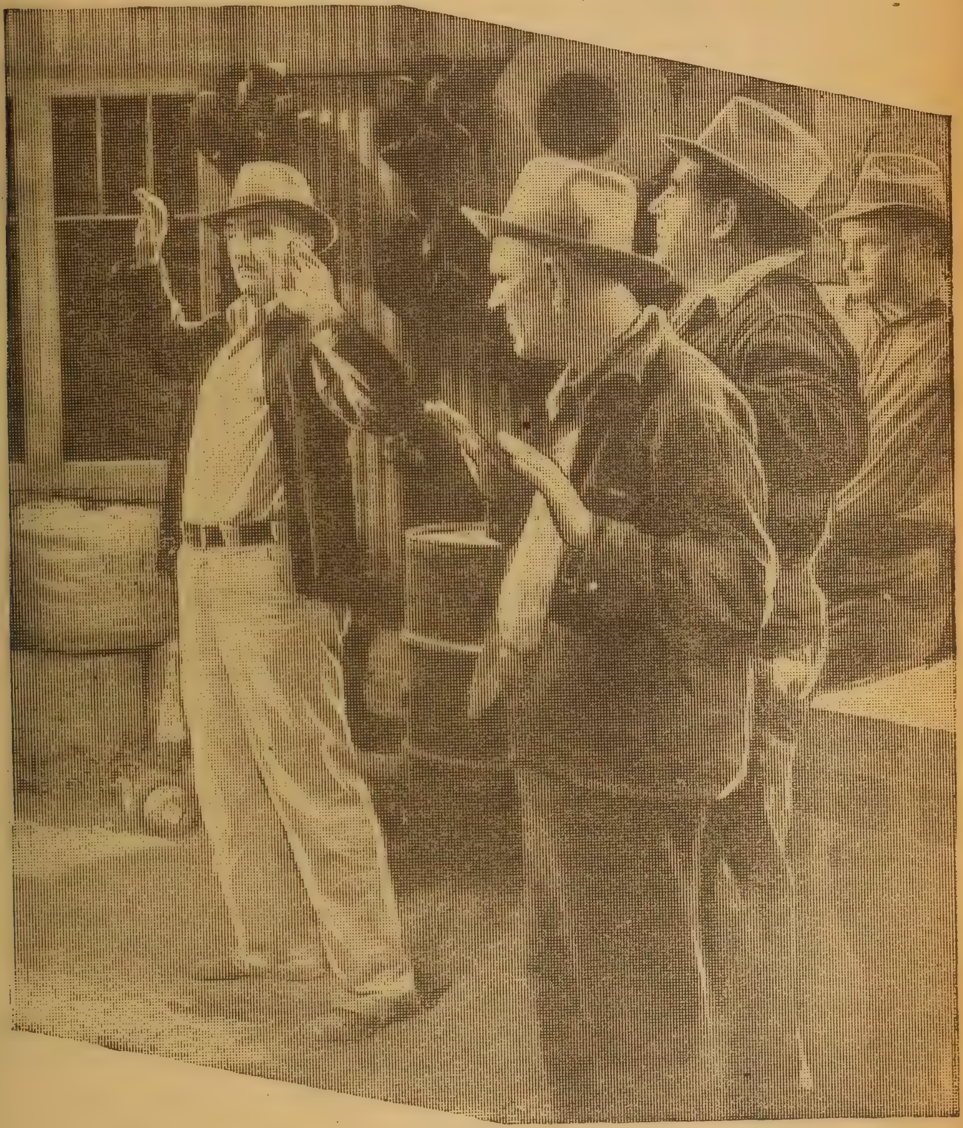
"Stay where you are!" rasped Danny's voice. "All of you start reaching!"

HE came down to a man, Joe, who was boss on the machine.

"How long have you been running this shovel?" he demanded.

"I'm doin' the best I can," the man muttered.

"It isn't good enough," O'Hara snapped. "This means a few more days wasted in getting this thing fixed!"



"Why—ever since the job started," Joe said sullenly.

O'Hara's tone promised no good. "Did it ever occur to you to use a little oil?" he asked. "Those cables are rusted through."

"Say what you like," Anderson remarked smoothly, "there's some kind of a jinx on this section."

O'Hara turned on him with a quick, hard look. "Yeah?" he barked. "Well, I'm going to run them out of camp—one at a time!" He turned sharply back to Joe. "Get your time and get out!" he ordered.

Joe stared at him sullenly for a moment. His dark glance met Anderson's briefly; then he turned and walked away.

O'Hara stood staring at the misused machinery.

"Mucking machines jamming, drill steels snapping, cave-ins——" he muttered half to himself.

There was real curiosity—and something else—in Anderson's voice. "How can you beat it, Chief?" he asked.

"I'll beat it!" O'Hara promised, his brows contracting stubbornly. "I'll get new equipment down here on this job if I have to build it myself."

A young clerk came across from the office.

"Mister O'Hara," he said respectfully, "Mister Billings, Company Engineer, is waiting in your office to see you."

"Thanks," O'Hara nodded. There was the hint of a fighting grin on his face as he turned to Anderson. "Now comes the squawk on the machinery I ordered!" he said, and strode away.

Fifteen minutes after they had met, Billings and O'Hara were deep in conversation over the affairs of the tunnel. Briefly O'Hara described to him the conditions he had found, saying something of his suspicions but more of the simple fact that their equipment, for whatever reason, was inadequate.

BILLINGS, a stout, weatherbeaten engineer of fifty, mopped his dripping forehead, and tapped O'Hara's letter.

"But this requisition represents an outlay of thousands, O'Hara," he protested.

O'Hara shook his head. "I'm sorry, Mister Billings," he said firmly, "I can't see any other way of driving this tunnel. I've tried to keep my figures as low as possible."

"Possibly you don't understand our position," Billings began somewhat uncomfortably, but O'Hara cut him off with a grim gesture.

"You talk about speed and don't know how to get it," he told the older man bluntly. "Three men before me drove their crews beyond endurance. It didn't remove hard rock; it only removed the men! It's impossible to go on without that equipment!"

Billings sat in silence for a moment, his red face growing redder with the intensity of his concentration.

"Let's go over your figures again," he said at last, "and see if we can't cut them down a little."

With a faint smile that might have been one of triumph, O'Hara came around the desk and sat down.

Three hours later, Billings straightened up.

"That doesn't cut it down much," he said ruefully.

O'Hara's voice was unyielding. "It's as far as we can go."

Billings sighed and reached for his crumpled linen coat.

"All right, O'Hara," he said. "I'll get the new equipment down to you as quickly as possible."

"Good!" O'Hara walked toward the door with the older man. In the outer office, they heard a woman's voice say sharply:

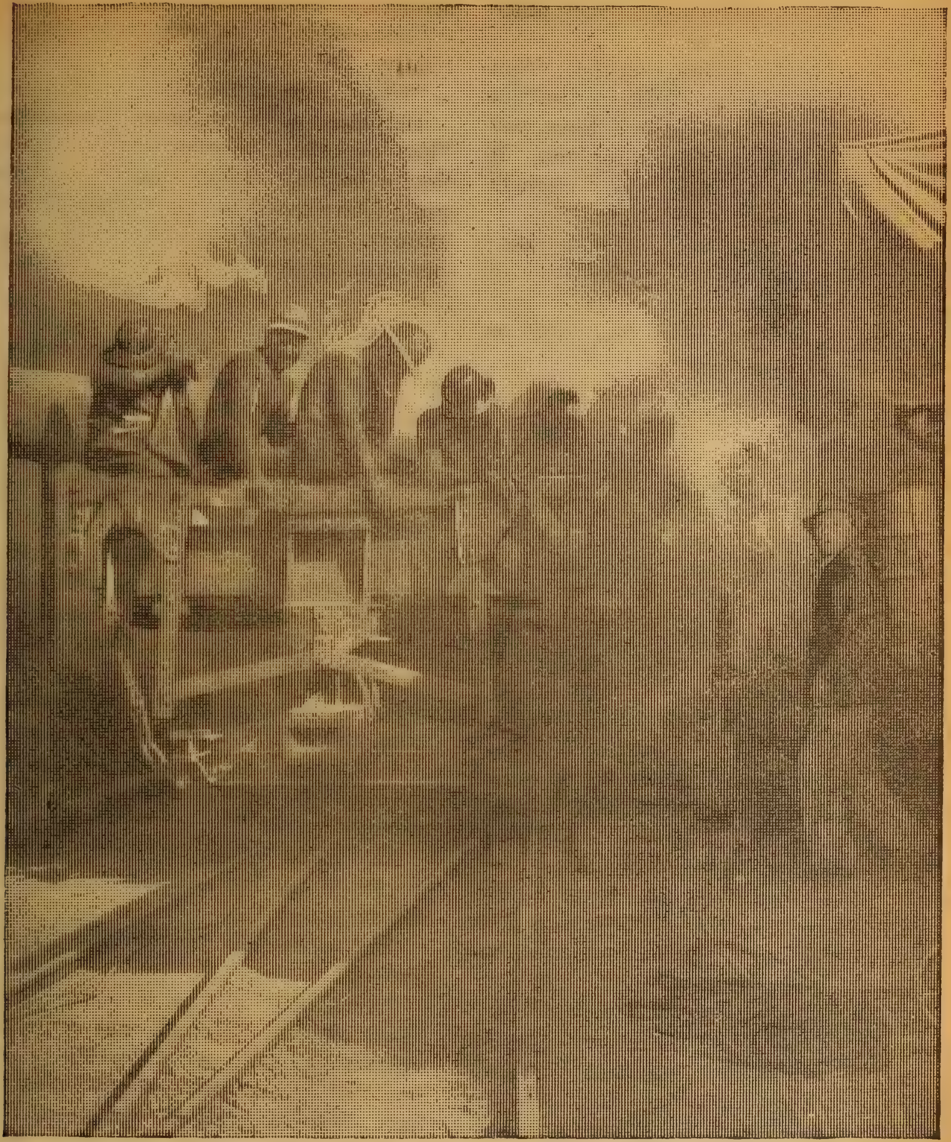
"No wonder this tunnel isn't getting built. I thought they were dug under mountains, not over desk tops."

They stared.

"Friend of yours?" Billings asked, amused; and then, as O'Hara shook his head: "Goodby, O'Hara, and good luck. If anyone can push this through, you can."

They shook hands warmly. "If I don't," O'Hara assured him, "it won't be because I didn't try."

AS Billings went out, O'Hara turned to look at the woman who had spoken



A locomotive came roaring out of the tunnel and pulled to a stop before the storehouse.

so tartly. He found her staring back at him.

What he saw was a good-looking young woman—he supposed she would be good-looking if she ever got her face clean—with dusty hair and a rumpled, soiled linen suit.

What she saw was a good-looking young giant—she supposed he would be good-looking if he ever got the grease and the frown off his face—with curly hair and dusty, greasy work clothes.

"Your opinions on tunnel construction sound very interesting, Miss——" he remarked when they had looked each other over.

"Miller," she supplied quickly. "Ann Miller. Sorry, Mister O'Hara, for that outburst, but I came such a long way through a lot of hot sun to see you. It was beginning to look as though I wouldn't get the chance after all."

"What can I do for you?" he asked coolly, ignoring the inferred flattery of her speech.

Coolness evidently had less effect on Miss Miller than heat.

"Mister O'Hara, you know you're a pretty famous man, don't you?" she smiled at him.

"No, I don't," he said shortly.

"You are," she assured him. "Everyone's read about your exploits on the Guatemala Bridge job and the Ecuador Tunnel."

He stared at her, silenced by genuine surprise, and she quickly pursued her advantage:

"You see," she hastened on sweetly, "I write for that woman's magazine 'Lovely Home,' and I think in this magnificent task you're attempting there is a wonderful story that will appeal to every woman. The romance and drama, the courageous fight you wage against the elements so that M'lady can have her bath—— Won't you take me through and tell me all about it?"

He moved impatiently. "I can't right now," he told her. "There's no romance in digging a tunnel, just sweat and hard work. These men are not blasting through hard rock so M'lady can have a bath. They don't care when she bathed last or when she'll bathe again. They work in the ground eight hours a day under the most difficult conditions just to make a living for themselves and their families. That's the whole story."

He started away, but she came after him.

"That's *your* story," she said airily, "but I'm not sticking to it, if you don't mind. If you're too busy, surely you can arrange for someone else to take me in."

"Impossible!" he exclaimed impatiently.

"Why?" she persisted.

He glared at her with real annoyance. "For one thing," he explained, trying not to be rude to this dirty-faced little pest, "hard rock men are very superstitious. They like women everywhere but in a tunnel. Now, if you'll excuse me——"

SHE stepped in front of him, smiling in a charming way that was wholly wasted on John O'Hara. "I won't excuse you at all," she said sweetly. "You can't put me off this way, Mister O'Hara. I came a long way to get something, and I'm not leaving without it."

O'Hara sighed. "Now, Miss Miller," he said as he might have said to a bad child, "why don't you be a good girl and go on back where you won't bother people?"

Her eyes sparkled, and a deep flush crept up under the dust on her cheeks. "It's a cinch," she snapped, "that I'm not getting far by bothering some people!"

He looked at her wearily, no more impressed by her temper than by her sweetness.

"I'm sorry," he began, but she cut him off.

"Now, I'll tell you something, Mister Arrogant Bull O'Hara!" she cried, her voice edged with an irritation born of hours of driving and waiting in burning heat. When I come after a story, I get it. And I've *got* it! Pick up a copy of tomorrow's Los Angeles *Chronicle,* and you'll see a yarn about the slovenly inefficiency of the engineer in charge of this job that'll make your hair curlier than it is now!"

He stared at her for an instant. So all that soft boloney about M'lady's bath was just a stall! The newspapers, he knew, had been aching for a story about the reasons for the delay at the Whitney

Tunnel. As if his work wasn't difficult enough already, without the newspapers mixing into it. Well—he dismissed the importance of the matter with a shrug. Nothing could be done about it now.

The girl stood between him and the door. Stooping slightly, he put his hands under her elbows and lifted her gently out of his way. Speechless with rage, she watched him go striding off across the yards. Then she did some striding on her own account, toward the parked Ford where her camera man, Willie, slumbered wearily.

She shook him awake and he sat up, bewildered.

"What—where are we?" he muttered wildly.

Ann climbed in beside him. "On our way back to Los Angeles," she told him grimly. "Come on."

But Ann reckoned without men and events.

AS O'Hara left the office and started toward the tunnel entrance, he noticed several men standing near the tool shed at the portal. One of them, he recognized, was Anderson; another, Danny, a husky laborer whom he had met. They all looked excited. O'Hara hastened his steps.

"Don't tell me my business, Danny," he heard Anderson say roughly. "We're driving tunnel here, and that shot is going off on time."

"But you'd better wait till we check with Mister O'Hara," Danny protested.

"You're responsible for the dynamite," Anderson said. "You know how many cases you gave them."

Danny sounded worried. "I gave them the right amount, but I can't figure out where the rest of the stuff disappeared to."

O'Hara interrupted abruptly. "What stuff's disappeared?" he demanded.

Relief flooded Danny's face. "Dynamite," he said. "Somebody took it out of the magazine, and——"

O'Hara glanced at his watch. "Stop that blast until we find out what happened to that dynamite!" he ordered sharply.

But even as Danny started on the run for the telephone, a low rumble came from inside the tunnel. "Too late," he muttered, and stopped dead in his tracks.

Then, from a little distance, another, sharper sound of crashing rock made them all whirl and stare. Above them, the mountain seemed almost to split in two!

With a deafening roar, thousands of tons of rock broke loose, toppling, sliding, leaping wildly as the tremendous slide started! Small frame buildings in its path crumpled like matchwood, with splinters leaping crazily in the air! The warehouse was overwhelmed, the little trestle spanning the road demolished!

O'HARA muttered an oath and started running. Ann Miller's Ford was on the road to the trestle. At the first sound of the slide she had jammed on the brakes. Now before her the road had lost itself in the fantastic confusion of gravel and boulders.

O'Hara stepped on the running board of the car. "You all right?" he asked with genuine concern.

She smiled, though a little shakily. "I think so," she said gamely. "You might take care of my friend here."

O'Hara peered over as she pointed to the bottom of the car. Willie was slumped in a heap.

"I'll have some one look after him. What struck him?" he asked the girl.

"Nothing," she explained casually. "He just fainted. He does that."

He glanced at her in some amazement, and she climbed out of the car and started across the yard with him.

"Your timing was awful, Mister O'Hara," she told him sweetly.

He was thinking of other things. "What do you mean?"

"I suppose you're going to deny that

you planned that landslide to happen when I was under it."

He stared at her, speechless for a moment. Then he said grimly: "That road is the only way out of here. I'll have to put up with you for a while, that's all."

She smiled maliciously. "You look so pleased," she told him, "and I'm so happy."

He spared her time for a glance of supreme disgust, and strode away toward the tool shed.

Danny was still there.

"Who was the shifter in charge of that blast?" O'Hara demanded.

"Nick Pollack," Danny said. "Here he comes now."

A dark-browed individual rode out of the tunnel on a locomotive and O'Hara went to meet him.

"Get your pay and clear out of camp!" he told him savagely. He was half aware that for a second Nick's eyes slid round to someone coming up behind him. Then the man began to bluster.

"What for? What's the matter?" he demanded loudly.

"You know what's the matter!" O'Hara raged. "It's a lucky thing for you that blast didn't injure any one. Tying up the work for two days is bad enough!"

"I don't know what you're talkin' about, Chief," Nick said sullenly.

"Then I've got a way of making myself clear. Get out of camp!"

For a moment Nick glared at O'Hara, then shrugged and turned away.

O'Hara stalked back to Danny, who stood now with Anderson.

"Who holds the keys to the powder magazine?" he demanded.

"Why——" Anderson hesitated. "I have one and Danny has——"

"I'll take those keys," O'Hara interrupted. "From now on, I'll issue every stick of dynamite that goes into that tunnel."

A flash of anger crossed Anderson's face as O'Hara wheeled and strode off toward the office.

AT supper that night, O'Hara found himself opposite Ann Miller at the table. She was with Anderson, who was being very attentive. O'Hara let pass several cutting remarks made to Anderson but obviously directed at him. He had other things on his mind.

When he had finished eating, he rose and the men's eyes fixed on his stern face.

"Men," he said tersely, "I want to change routine a little. This is as good a time as any to tell you. That road has to be cleared as soon as possible to receive a shipment of supplies and equipment. I want gangs working on both sides to the middle; all hands out of the tunnel to rebuild the trestle and clear the place up!"

As he stopped talking and turned away from the table, Ann said sweetly:

"You wouldn't be hurrying up the work just for my benefit, would you?"

He stared at her unsmiling.

"That's not the only reason," he said, "but it helps."

Ann smiled at his departing back. "The Whitney Tunnel seems to make men serious, doesn't it?" she demarked to Anderson.

"Well, it's the toughest section on the whole aqueduct."

Her tone was flattering: "Then naturally only the best engineers in the world would be employed."

"Well, I wouldn't go so far as to say that," he protested modestly. "Of course——"

Quickly she followed her advantage. "What makes it so tough, as you put it?"

"Many things. More than you can tell over a cup of coffee," he said hopefully.

Ann turned on her most attractive smile. "Mister Anderson, I'm terribly interested. Won't you show Willie and me around the camp?"

"Why, of course," he said, pleased, "if you like."

"After dinner?" she pressed.

"Sure!" he said eagerly. After all, such a pretty girl couldn't be so interested just in the tunnel!

AT the tunnel portal, Danny stopped them respectfully.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Anderson," he said, "but you can't take them in."

"Why not?" Anderson said roughly, already a little upset by the fact that Ann had collected Willie and his camera to accompany them.

"Mister O'Hara's orders," Danny told him.

Anderson flushed a little. "Get out of the way!" he ordered. "I——"

"Anderson!" An icy, imperative voice interrupted, and O'Hara, frowning blackly, walked up to them. "We don't allow visitors in the tunnel. You know that."

Anderson's face was flushed darkly now. "But——" he began.

"I need you down at the road," O'Hara snapped. "Go on down and I'll meet you there later."

Somewhat to Ann's amazement, Anderson went, without another word. She looked expectantly at O'Hara.

"I thought I told you to stay in camp," he said, unsmiling, and Ann cast swiftly about in her mind for a new approach.

"I couldn't," she said gravely.

He sent a glance after Anderson. "Has any one been bothering you?" he asked.

She stifled an impulse to smile. "No, nothing like that. It's just that—well, you know, everybody has some sort of a quirk, like watching ships come in and out of the harbor, chasing fire engines. I—I'm an excavation watcher."

He was not amused. "Now, Miss Miller," he said wearily, "I don't want to make myself more disagreeable than I have to, but——"

"You know," she interrupted solemnly, "I've been fired from three jobs because I couldn't tear myself away from excavations. They fascinate me!"

He frowned. "You must go back to your cabin. You can't be wandering around camp alone at night."

"Why not?"

"These men seeing an attractive woman——" He caught himself, blushed, stumbled doggedly on. "Well—that is—it isn't safe."

"Oh!" she cried cheerily, "then if it isn't safe, the least you could do is to *take* me back. Don't you think so?"

"No," he said in a tone of utter exasperation, "I don't think so, but I will."

TRIUMPHANTLY, Ann reached for his arm. He was two long strides ahead of her.

She ran to catch up, linking her arm in his. He glanced down at her and surprised himself by slowing up.

"Did that landslide set you back terribly?" she asked curiously.

It seemed to O'Hara that she was the most persistently curious woman he had ever met. "About thirty-six hours," he said.

"Don't you ever get discouraged?"

He grinned at last, and she was conscious of a touch of pleasure.

"Haven't time," he told her.

"Did it ever occur to you that these delays might not be accidental?" Ann probed.

He looked at her again, and his mouth tightened grimly.

"I *know* they're not!"

"Well, what about reporting it to the company?"

"I have."

"You'd think they'd do something about it," she offered encouragingly.

"They will," he said dryly. "Some time next week a pair of gum-shoe investigators will appear."

Ann thought of the two men from her own paper who had come back from the

Whitney Tunnel without anything but a jinx story.

"By that time you could pretty well find out for yourself," she said thoughtfully.

He shook his head. "You can't play detective and drive tunnel at the same time."

"You can't drive tunnel unless *someone* plays detective," she observed and he looked down at her in some surprise. The girl seemed to be capable of an occasional bright thought.

"I can try, though," he said forcefully, and she looked at him curiously.

Now that it wasn't quite so hot and she'd had a chance to recover from her weariness and irritation, she rather liked this man. He wasn't really unreasonable. Just determined to do his job.

"You know," she said after a moment, "some people—in my business for instance—if they don't like their jobs, they just quit."

He laughed, and it was a pleasant, if somewhat rusty sound.

"That depends on the person, not on the business," he said.

Ann smiled happily. "That's the way I feel about it," she cried. "Now you understand why I must get an angle on what's causing your accidents, and some photographs of that hole in the ground."

Friendliness vanished from his voice. "That's out. You can't go in that tunnel."

"Then it means that either I quit—or my boss fires me."

"If he thinks he can do any better, tell him to come down here himself."

Ann chuckled. "I tried that. It didn't work." On the steps of her shack she turned, looking at him curiously, casting about in her mind for another approach.

"Say," she asked suddenly, "what have you got in that tunnel that you're trying to hide from me?"

"Nothing," he said bluntly.

Her own mouth could go stubborn, too, even through a smile. "I'm going to get in that tunnel in spite of you," she told him.

"If you do, I'll have you thrown out," he said pleasantly.

She laughed. "I'm beginning to think you're a pretty fresh guy."

He grinned back at her. "That makes us even," he said as he turned away. "I like you, too."

SHE stared after him for a moment, intrigued. Then her interest in him as a man faded before the necessity to figure out how she could crack this story. She twisted her face in a grimace of disgust, as she remembered the brash speech that had got her down here.

"Why don't you two guys just admit you're not good enough to crack it," she had gibed at the two reporters who had come back without a story from the Whitney camp. "You boys went down to interview the engineer, and came back with a picture of him after he was killed. Nice work. Say, you got off easy. If I was running this rag, do you know what I'd do?"

It was right there that Hubbel, the boss, had walked in, and the next thing she knew the two grinning reporters were telling her with false sympathy about the 120 degree heat at the Whitney camp.

Well—she shrugged her shoulders and sighed. It was just as hot as they'd said, and this O'Hara man was certainly tough. Evidently he agreed with her that the series of accidents at the Whitney Tunnel couldn't have been merely accidental, but he wasn't going to be much help to a newspaper girl. These people who figured that their business was their own—Ann sighed again and went to bed.

IT was late the next afternoon, with Ann and Willie trying desperately to keep cool, when the emergency whistle sounded sharply. Running men headed for the tunnel mouth, and Ann clutched Willie's arm excitedly.

"Get your camera, quick!" she ordered. "This sounds like news."

At the entrance, men were swarming onto a mucking train, to go into the tunnel, while others stood about, waiting. Ann circulated nervously, and though the men looked at her curiously, they answered her questions.

"What happened?" she asked eagerly.

"Cave-in."

"Anybody hurt?"

"Report came out that two were killed and three injured."

"What caused it?"

"How do I know?" the man grunted. "I wasn't there."

Ann passed this over. "Where's O'Hara?"

"He's gone inside."

Ann found Willie, busy with his camera.

"We've got to get in there, Willie," she said tensely. "Just what we came after! Couldn't have been better if they'd staged it!"

They hurried toward the tunnel portal, waving press cards at the burly workman who stopped them. He was unimpressed.

"You can't stop news, mister," Willie protested.

The man glowered at them. "No, but I can stop you," he said. "Get out of the way."

Impatiently they waited, until the surge of the men toward the tracks told them the train was coming out. Worming his way forward, Willie snapped pictures furiously.

On the locomotive stood O'Hara, his face showing white and set through the grime. He made an eloquent gesture to the waiting stretcher bearers, and jumped down from the locomotive. Ann slipped through the crowd to follow him as he made his way to Anderson and Swede.

"The first day I arrived on this job," he began abruptly, almost quivering with rage, "I noticed that spot when we went through the tunnel. Those laggings and timber segments were cracked. I told you to have them replaced."

Anderson whirled furiously on Swede. "Didn't you take care of that?" he shouted.

"I was going to get around to it," Swede muttered defensively, "but I was busy somewhere else."

"That doesn't answer for the death of two men," O'Hara gritted.

"I can't help what happened to them," Swede said defiantly.

"Then maybe you can do something about this!" O'Hara blazed. Swede reeled backward from O'Hara's smashing fist in his face. "Now, get out!" he shouted.

ANN gulped joyously and raced for a telephone.

When she had her city room she told her story eagerly—water seepage, unsafe section, cave-in caused by swelling ground—all due to negligence.

"There's the angle you've been looking for!" she called triumphantly into the phone. "And keep your shirt on, you big bruiser. Before I'm through I'll have enough pictures to fill the rotogravure section!"

She hung up. As she turned, her look of triumph faded to consternation. O'Hara stood watching her.

"No, you won't," he told her.

"Now, listen, Mister O'Hara," Ann began seriously. "You can't stop news."

"I can try," he said doggedly.

"But don't you see?" she protested. "An accident like this is bound to come out. There'll be a coroner's inquest and by tomorrow this place will be overrun with reporters. I was here first. Why not give me a break?"

There was a bitter contempt in his eyes that stung Ann.

"You know two men were killed and three injured," he said harshly. "Maybe they won't pull through, and all you're worried about is a story. Is that what newspapers do to a woman?"

He brushed past her to the telephone, and she went out quickly, flushing.

Impatiently O'Hara waited to be connected with the company office in Los Angeles, and so intent was he on his conversation that he failed to notice Swede Mulhoussen's sullen, listening face at the window.

"I tell you," he said emphatically into the phone, after he had briefly described the disaster, "the only way it can be done is with an entirely new crew—muckers, foremen, mechanics, the whole outfit! There's some one in here who's gumming up the works, and I haven't time to rat him out."

He listened for a moment, then burst out: "Man alive! Don't you realize the landslide's going to hold me up two days? That equipment due tomorrow can't come through. I've had to take men out of the tunnel to clear the road. . . . No, I'm not accusing anybody of anything until I've had a chance to find out, but before I'm willing to assume the responsibility for what happens around here, I want a new crew, and I want to hire them personally!"

Again he listened. "All right," he said in a tone of satisfaction, "I'll get a new crew together as quickly as I can."

Swede slipped quickly away as O'Hara hung up and started out of the office toward the hospital.

HE was startled to find Ann there, working hard at the unsavory job of cleaning up bloody basins and instruments. Resentment faded from his face as he spoke to her.

"You don't have to do this," he said gently. "I can get one of the men in."

Her face was white. "If you don't mind, I want to do it."

He looked at her. "Still looking for romance in a tunnel?" he asked.

She shook her head. "It's a tough break, isn't it?" she said warmly. His lips tightened against his own emotion.

"These things happen," he said briefly.

"Driving tunnel takes more than just machines and hard work, doesn't it?" she said with sudden admiration. He only looked at her inquiringly, and she stumbled on: "I mean—it takes a courage and a determination to come through in spite of everything."

He was silent for a moment, disarmed by the new feeling that she was a really sympathetic human being, and by his own momentary bafflement. "I've got to lick this job, Ann," he murmured.

"I'd like to help," she said softly, and it was as if the bond that had existed between them for just a second had snapped.

He laughed awkwardly. "It's a man's job," he said quickly. "A woman can't be of much help."

DANNY burst into the room.

"Say, Boss," he said breathlessly. "There's trouble down at the tracks."

O'Hara went out after him on the run. Ann whipped off her apron and followed at a discreet distance.

There was a crowd of men on the tunnel tracks, and from the top of a muck car, Swede Mulhoussen was addressing them fervently. At the edge of the crowd, O'Hara paused for a moment to listen.

"It ain't a question of how much they're payin' or an extra bonus or nothin'," Swede was arguing. "If there are any of you guys that got families like me, it don't matter how much they want to pay. They got to guarantee us safety. What's the good of another ten bucks a week, if you ain't goin' to be here to enjoy it the next? I say we oughta walk out! And when they can prove that this job is being run right, we'll come back, and not before!"

At the sympathetic murmur of voices,

O'Hara flushed angrily. This dirty rat was turning to his advantage a disaster that had been his own fault.

"I was fired," Swede went on, "for something I couldn't help, because the blame for the cave-in has got to be pushed off on someone's shoulders. Is that fair?"

With a yell, little Tony Gonzatti leaped out from among the men. His face was still bruised from Shane's pummeling, and his eyes were blazing with loyalty.

"This man, he only make trouble!" he shouted, pushing Swede aside. "Somebody cause all the accidents in the tunnel. Meester O'Hara, he only try to stop them!"

"I'll do the talking!" Swede bellowed furiously, reaching for Tony.

O'Hara and Danny pushed forward. "Let that man alone!" O'Hara said with savage quiet, and Swede stared at him uncertainly. "I wouldn't blame any one of you for walking out," O'Hara said quietly to the men. "I'm not offering any alibis. There was only one reason for that cave-in—negligence. But there's one thing I know. That cave-in has got to be braced before the whole mountain pours through the hole. I once said I wouldn't ask any man to do anything I wouldn't do myself. You can quit or stay on the job. That work has to be done, and I need a crew. I'm going into the tunnel and I want you men to follow me."

He turned to Swede. "I told you to get out of camp!" he barked. "Maybe you didn't quite get the idea!"

Swede's mouth opened and closed; he slouched away. O'Hara made his way quickly through the massed men and climbed onto the locomotive. He looked back at the men expectantly, and his face lighted with gratitude as they began climbing onto the train.

O'Hara cast a last look around, and a thin smile touched his mouth. Quickly he went back along the train. He came to an apparently empty car, and with one gesture removed the pin from the rachet on the side of the car. The rachet began to spin, starting the dump mechanism. Clawing wildly at the tilting floor of the car, Ann, Willie and the camera slid out on the ground.

Paying no attention to them, O'Hara righted the car, jumped in, blew his whistle, and the train moved into the tunnel, leaving Ann and Willie, baffled and chagrined, behind.

ANN was in her shack, restlessly packing, when Willie burst breathlessly in, that night.

"Ann!" he cried. "Listen! Me and Tony's been doing a little snooping! Listen, Ann, we saw Anderson out behind a conduit. He and the three men O'Hara fired were holding a conference. We couldn't get close enough to hear everything they were saying, but I heard something about meeting at the tunnel tonight."

Ann's eyes were growing bright with excitement. "Willie!" she cried. "Maybe you stumbled on to something. It might be the angle we're looking for."

"I think we oughta tell O'Hara!" Willie stated.

Ann shook her head positively. "He'd just pass it off—or think I'm looking for an excuse to stay here a little longer. We've got to do it ourselves! Come on!"

Through the darkness they made their way cautiously toward the tunnel portal. A train swept past them across the trestle and stopped beside the equipment storehouse at the entrance. In the floodlight that bathed the tunnel entrance, they saw Anderson pick up something from the floor of the car, jump off, and go into the storehouse.

Running silently, they reached the storehouse and listened, breathless.

"Here's the plunger," Anderson said. "Now get it hooked up with those telephone wires. Step on it."

Ann lifted her head and peeked cautiously in the window. Joe and Swede

Mulhoussen were there. As Swede tried to go down on one knee to help Joe connect the dynamite plunger with the telephone wires, he swayed.

"You're drunk!" Anderson accused Swede furiously.

"He's all right, Chief," Joe soothed.

Anderson glared for a moment. "Nick and Shane are coming in from the East Morongo entrance," he growled. "I'm going in as far as the junction to see if they got the powder set."

He strode out, and Swede promptly pulled a bottle from his pocket. Joe glanced up at him.

"You're celebrating ahead of time," he said, and turned back to the wires. He grunted. "That's got it," he muttered. "Now we gotta wait for Anderson to get back."

With a jerk at Willie's arm, Ann raced for Anderson's train. They clambered up, and lay very still on the dark bottom of a car while the locomotive roared toward the "Y" formed by the two branches of the tunnel.

When Anderson brought the train to a halt and climbed down, Ann peered through a crack. Nick and Shane were working with shovels near the telephone booth and supply house that stood near the middle of the Y.

"POWDER all set?" Anderson asked.

"Sure," Nick told him. "Enough to take the top of the mountain off. And it's all covered up so you'd never see it, and connected with the phone wires. Where's the plunger?"

"Joe and Swede got it outside," Anderson said. "Now, here's the layout. When we get all set, I'm going to call O'Hara on the phone, and tell him there's been an accident at the cave-in. We know how far it is from the entrance of the tunnel to where the night shift's working on the cave-in, don't we?"

"Yeah," Shane said doubtfully, "but he——"

"The rest's easy," Anderson assured him. "We know how fast he can travel. We'll time the explosion to catch him when he reaches the men. We'll close off the tunnel here, and he won't be able to dig himself out, even if——" His words trailed off.

Ann clutched at Willie's coat sleeve, her hand trembling with excitement. They were actually planning to kill O'Hara and fifty—a hundred—two hundred other men!

"We've got to warn O'Hara!" she whispered. Willie gulped and nodded, and they crawled quietly out of the car.

Stooping low on the opposite side, they worked up toward the locomotive. Willie's camera banged against the car and Anderson whirled sharply.

"What was that?" he called, and gasped at the sight of Ann scrambling aboard the locomotive, Willie close behind. The train started with a jerk.

Anderson put out a restraining hand as Nick started after the moving train.

"They won't get very far," he said with an evil smile, and stepped to the phone. "Joe," he said into it, "that damn girl and the little shrimp are on their way out. Get them as they come out and hold them. We'll be right there."

In the open once more, in front of the tool shed, some little distance from the storehouse, Ann brought the locomotive to a screeching stop. Hidden by shadows, Joe and Swede moved forward.

Ann climbed down, set to run. A heavy hand fell on her shoulder. She tried to scream, and a hand over her mouth choked back the sound. Willie was struggling in Joe's arms. Kicking, scratching, wriggling, they were dragged along to the tool shed.

Desperately, Ann gouged Swede's shins with her sharp heels, and broke free of his grasp. Her headlong flight was stopped at the door by the arrival of Shane and Anderson.

Anderson watched, grinning, as her

flailing arms and legs were bound with rope.

"Too bad you had to get mixed up in this," he said. He handed Willie's camera to Swede. "Here, get rid of this," he said. Willie, bound, too, watched in anguish as Swede put the camera high on a wooden shelf.

Anderson glanced around and beckoned to the men. "I'm going to call O'Hara," he said, and went out.

AS he turned away from the telephone in the storehouse, Shane, Nick and Joe joined him.

"Where's Swede?" Anderson asked.

"Left him to guard the little guy and the girl," Joe said.

Anderson nodded. "O'Hara's on his way," he told them. "Douse the lights, and let's get out of sight."

On the floor of the tool shed, Ann and Willie lay and looked at each other helplessly.

Swede grinned at them, and tilted back comfortably in his chair. They were safely bound—he lifted his bottle again, and tossed it away, empty, with a grunt of satisfaction.

Desperately, Ann's eyes searched the place. By now O'Hara must be on his way!

Suddenly she drew an excited breath. Willie's camera was balanced precariously on the edge of the shelf just above Swede's nodding head, and only a shaky two-by-four braced the shelf!

She signaled Willie frantically with her eyes. At last he got the idea, and started rolling. Swede glanced down stupidly as he noticed the movement, then nodded again.

Cautiously Willie bumped the brace with his shoulder. The camera tottered. Again he bumped—again—Ann closed her eyes as the camera toppled from the shelf and crashed heavily on Swede's nodding head.

The corner of the heavy box struck him squarely. He grunted, swayed, and tumbled to the floor.

Swiftly Ann and Willie rolled back to back, their fingers fumbling at the knotted ropes that held them.

Suddenly Ann paused. In the yards a locomotive was starting. In a moment it would be running past the tool house, past them, and O'Hara would be on his way to death!

Tears of rage and fear brimmed Ann's eyes. Then Willie gave a muffled exclamation.

He nodded toward the camera box. The force of the fall had spilled out his photo-light holder. Perhaps that burst of light coming from a supposedly deserted tool house would make O'Hara stop.

The locomotive was on the trestle. Willie reached the holder, pressed the catch. Nothing happened. He groaned. The bulb was burned out.

Sweating, they fumbled a new bulb into place. The locomotive was roaring past the tool house—they would be too late——

O'HARA, grim-faced, glanced back at the blinding flash of light from the tool house windows. He slowed the car down, and thrust a gun into Danny's hands.

"Here, see what that was!" he commanded. "I'll go ahead."

Again the locomotive roared toward the tunnel entrance, and in the storehouse Anderson gripped Joe's arm excitedly.

"Okay!" he whispered. "Here he comes now! We'll start timing him!"

Danny spared only a second for amazement at the scene in the tool house. Then he went swiftly to work with a knife, listening as he worked to Ann's almost incoherent babbling.

"O'Hara—they're going to kill him!" she gasped. "Anderson has a dynamite plunger—the powder's in the tunnel—going to set it off with telephone wires."

"Where's the plunger?" Danny demanded, still working over Willie's bonds.

"I don't know," Ann babbled. "It's around here somewhere. But we've got to stop him before he gets too far inside the tunnel."

"It's too late," Danny said. "We can't stop him now. We've got to find that plunger."

Free at last, they ran from the shed.

"What are you going to do?" Danny shouted as Ann jumped toward a locomotive standing there.

"I'm going after him," she cried back. "I've got to reach him."

"You can't," Danny said, running along beside the moving car. "It's suicide. The only chance you've got to stop him is by phone at one of the stations along the line."

"I'll try that," she called back desperately as the car gathered speed, and he yelled after her:

"We'll try to find Anderson!"

IN the storehouse, Anderson kept his eyes intently on the luminous dial of his watch. "I'll give him three more minutes," he murmured, and glanced up, startled, as Ann's locomotive roared past toward the tunnel mouth.

"It's the girl!" cried Joe.

"Let her go!" Anderson said grimly. "It'll save us a lot of trouble. Get on that plunger——"

"Stay where you are!" rasped Danny's voice from the doorway. "All of you start reaching!"

Hands in air, they whirled to confront his grim face and steady gun.

"Where's that plunger?" Danny demanded.

"I don't know what you're talking about!" Anderson said coldly.

"Here, Willie!" Danny said sharply. "Keep this on 'em."

He handed the gun to Willie, and started searching the room for the plunger. No one thought of Swede, crumpled drunkenly on the floor of the tool shed.

Inside the tunnel, Ann pounded down the track, the klaxon of her locomotive sounding constantly. At the first phone booth she ground to a screeching halt and flung herself toward the telephone. Suppose he had already run past the phone booth at the junction! Madly she twirled the little handle!

RUNNING up ahead, O'Hara stared grimly ahead into the tunnel blackness, wondering what new trouble he would find at the slide, wondering what the flash inside the tool shed had meant.

As he approached the junction, he could hear the jangle of the phone bell. He frowned in irritation, and slowed uncertainly. He really hadn't time—— He ran a little past the junction, then stopped and backed. It might be important——

Ann almost sobbed as she heard his voice at last.

"O'Hara!" she gasped. "There's dynamite planted at the junction. They're going to kill you. There's nothing wrong at the slide."

"But there's no wires leading in here!" he protested.

"Telephone wires!" she told him, pounding her fist against the tunnel wall. "Will you come out of there! They're liable to blow it up any minute!"

He thought rapidly. "There are men in there!" he decided. "A blast at the junction would bury them all alive! I've got to get them out!"

"You can't!" she screamed at him. "You'll be killed!"

"Listen, Ann!" he shouted sternly. "You get out of the tunnel as fast as you can! I'm going ahead!"

The receiver clicked up and Ann leaned against the tunnel wall, blind for a moment, and shaking with excitement.

Get out of the tunnel, nothing! If he was going to be blown to bits she could see herself running the other way!

On sobbing breaths, she muttered names of abuse and affection at O'Hara as she ran for the locomotive, sent it pounding down the tunnel track full speed!

With a roar and a tightening of the heart she went past the "Y" where the dynamite was buried. Any minute, now, it might happen——

Tears tightened her throat again and brimmed in her eyes, but she scrubbed them away with the back of a grimy hand and stared desperately ahead for sight of O'Hara's locomotive.

O'HARA hardly waited for his car to come to a stop before he flung himself off, brushed aside Tony Gonzatti, and shut off the air valve.

"Every one on the cars!" he yelled, as the din of the drills ceased. The men swarmed toward him, quick to recognize the warning in his face.

As the last man scrambled on, O'Hara leaped aboard and threw the locomotive into gear. It moved slowly forward, then jerked helplessly and stopped. A pick hastily flung aside, had dropped across the track. The train was derailed!

O'Hara groaned, then yelled commandingly at the panic-stricken workmen.

"Men!" he shouted. "The only chance we have to get out of here alive is to get these cars back on the track! Now, come on!"

Frantically, they fell to work, laboring against a danger they did not know. Suddenly a locomotive's roar reached their ears; a headlight flickered on the tunnel walls. Ann's locomotive roared in and stopped, and the men ran, with a yell, for the second train.

O'Hara clambered, white-faced, onto the locomotive. "I told you to get out of the tunnel!" he shouted at Ann.

"I couldn't!" she shouted back. "I had to come after you!"

Tears, coming faster now, washed white tracks down the dust of her face. As he threw the lever and the train began to move out of the tunnel, O'Hara gave her a look compounded of adoration and wish to murder.

"Well," he said grimly, "you've given us our only chance to get out of here alive."

Furiously the train roared out of the section—past the "Y"—Ann held her breath, her eyes bright now, and dry. O'Hara kept his grim face straight ahead, and the men held on with white-knuckled tensity. If only Danny had been able to find Anderson——

IN the storehouse, Danny muttered relievedly as he located the plunger. He had his hand out for it when a sound at the door made him turn sharply. He glanced up in time to see Swede, drunk but dangerous, lunge in toward Willie.

Danny yelled as Swede's slashing blow sent Willie to the floor and his gun flying through the air. With one motion, Danny ripped loose the connection and flung the plunger full into the face of Shane, who came charging him! Then Swede and Joe were upon him, and he was struggling furiously.

"Get this thing connected again!" Anderson yelled at Nick, as Danny swung a desperate left at Swede. The big man toppled backward into a piece of equipment and lay still upon the floor.

His mouth bleeding, Danny twisted away from Joe and landed on top of Nick, who was working nervously at the connection. Again Joe caught up with Danny, pulling him off, and Anderson and Nick worked furiously to re-connect the wires.

Sobbing with rage, Danny fought, struggling to get back to that plunger. Then Willie sat up, dazedly. With a yell, he threw himself wabblingly upon Nick, but Nick tossed him back with a blow that cracked sharply, and left Willie quiet again.

Desperately, Danny crashed his fist

into Joe's face, and hurled himself toward Anderson and Nick.

His outstretched hand almost touched the plunger—Anderson yanked him backward, hurling him to the floor.

With a panting curse, Anderson reached for the plunger! Something jerked his arm back—with a yell of fury he turned and smashed his fist into the already pulpy face of Willie.

Nick shook himself loose, and crawled toward the plunger—pushed it in—and nothing happened!

LIVID, Anderson slapped Nick across the face. "Now, what's the matter?" he yelled, peering at the telephone block. A wire dangled loose.

"Connect that wire, you fool!" he shouted.

With shaking fingers, Nick made the connection, thrust home the plunger. They waited, panting. In a second, there was a dull rumble, then a deafening rolling roar.

Anderson scrambled to his feet with a grin, and Joe got up groggily.

"Disconnect those wires from the telephone and let's get out of here!" Anderson ordered.

"What about these two guys?" Joe panted, pointing to Danny and Willie.

"We'll have to take 'em with us!" Anderson went quickly out the door. Smoke and dust were rolling from the tunnel portal in a heavy yellow cloud, and Anderson grinned again. Then his mouth dropped open, as a locomotive came roaring out of the tunnel and pulled to a stop before the storehouse.

With a yell of terror, he turned back into the house as O'Hara, fantastically dust-covered, leaped for him.

Like a madman, O'Hara attacked, and there were other dust-covered madmen who cared with equal lack of tenderness for Nick and Joe.

When Anderson lay in a bloody and unconscious heap, O'Hara rose panting to his feet.

"Take him away," he commanded. "Call the police at Indio and tell them to come down here right away." He looked around. "Where's the girl?"

Her voice, cracked with excitement, led him to her. Her eyes shining in her scratched and dusty face, she was glued to the telephone, calling frantically for the Los Angeles *Chronicle.*

O'Hara grinned. It seemed that men didn't have an exclusive corner on being in love with their jobs.

ANN MILLER'S name prefaced a series of the most spectacular stories the Los Angeles papers had carried for years, as Anderson and his gang were exposed and charged with sabotage and murder.

Ann herself looked extraordinarily bright-eyed and beautiful on the day when John O'Hara called at her Los Angeles office.

She eyed him severely. "I thought I told you not to come up here when I gave you my address," she scolded. "And besides, you're late!"

There was a smile in his eyes. "Sorry," he apologized soberly, "but they're digging an excavation down the street. I couldn't tear myself away."

She calculated for a moment. "Any steel enforcements or timber segments—or fences to lean on?" she inquired.

"Sure!" he said.

Ann came around the desk and took his arm joyfully. "Then come on!" she cried. "What are we waiting for?"

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 3

THE LAST OF THE PAGANS

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture with Mala, Lotus, and an all native cast.

(See the January Movie Action Magazine for the full fictionized story of this picture.)

It is strange that, when we think of South Sea natives, we think only of beautiful dancing girls, swimming in a moon-lit surf, and a generally lazy existence. The Last of the Pagans corrects that impression—and with a bang! Through the natural and unaffected performances of Mala and Lotus, we get a glimpse of what life is really like for them—life in its rawest, most bitter aspects. Don't think for a minute that Mala takes everything lying down! He's a brown tornado when danger threatens, or when fear of the white man's oppression gets too strong. Before the picture is over, we have seen murderous tropical beasts, a death-dealing typhoon, a cave-in of a phosphate mine, slavery and slave-dealers, and an unending procession of other common occurrances in their pagan lives.

A WORTHY SEQUEL TO THE THRILLING "ESKIMO."

MARY BURNS, FUGITIVE

A Paramount picture with Sylvia Sidney, Melvyn Douglas, Wallace Ford, Alan Baxter, and Pert Kelton.

This picture will get you, make no mistake about it! It will make you stop and think about what would happen to you if *you* were suddenly called to account for a crime committed by a friend of yours—something of which you would be perfectly innocent, but which made you look guilty. Sylvia Sydney falls in love with a fine looking young man. She knows nothing of him, and she doesn't care. Then, suddenly, she is hurled into the midst of a pitched battle—G-men against the man she loves! He escapes, she is arrested. She can't give the information the police want, so she is convicted and sent to jail! What follows is as gripping a story as anyone would want.

ACTION, VIOLENCE, AND CRUELTY—A GREAT STORY, ALL THE MORE POWERFUL BECAUSE IT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED TO YOU!

KIND LADY

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture with Aline MacMahon, Basil Rathbone, Dudley Digges, and Frank Albertson.

Hollywood is going in for stories which are different from the usual run-of-the-mill this season. Take Kind Lady, for instance—the story of a rich old lady who has a priceless art collection. A gang of smooth working thieves descend upon her and try to steal her treasures without taking them out of her house—by putting her under the influence of a drug, and then organizing a sale of the whole gallery. It's a brilliant idea, and well worked out in this suspense-laden thriller.

HATS OFF TO M-G-M FOR BRINGING PICTURES OF THIS CALIBRE TO THE SCREEN. IT'S A DANDY CROOK PICTURE WITH GREAT PERFORMANCES!

Continued on page 65

LAWLESS RANGE

His six-guns and two good fists put down a crime wave that all Pequeno Valley couldn't lick!

THERE was no hint of danger in the sweltering heat that covered the little cow town of Elk City. The dusty main street was deserted save for two horses standing at the hitching rack in front of the Saloon and Hotel. The inhabitants had fled indoors to escape the merciless rays of the midday sun.

John Middleton rode down the main street, his lean face moving to the right and left as he looked at the wooden buildings casually. In front of the saloon, he dismounted and started for the swinging doors.

And then it happened!

It came with such rapidity that he had little chance to realize exactly what was taking place. The sultry stillness of the afternoon was shattered with the roar of two shots inside the saloon. The swinging doors opened and two men came backing out, six-guns roaring in their hands.

Somewhere in the saloon a man screamed: "Stop them! They've robbed me!"

The two men swerved, heading for their horses. Middleton had no time to reach for his gun. One of the men, holding a canvas bag in his free hand, bumped into him.

Middleton's right went up in a short upper-cut, catching the man on the jaw. He went down, the canvas bag falling from his hand. Middleton leaped for the other man. A gun roared. A bullet cut his flesh near his waist. The sting of the bullet jarred him back.

The second man landed on his horse in a wild leap. The bandit who had been sent to the sidewalk with Middleton's right was on his feet. The town had come to life with shots and running men. A bartender was on the sidewalk, yelling at the top of his voice.

Middleton snatched up the canvas bag with his left hand and streaked his six-gun out with his right. The two robbers were on their horses, racing out of town. Bullets flew, but over their heads for the firing was wild.

"Stick 'em up!" a voice commanded Middleton. He felt the end of a six-gun prodding into his back!

HE turned quickly, with an amazed expression on his face. He was looking in the rugged face of the town marshal,

A fictionization of the Republic picture of the same title.

THE CAST

JOHN WAYNE	John Middleton
SHEILA MANNORS	Anne Mason
Earle Dwire	Emmett
Frank McGlynn, Jr.	Carter
Jack Curtis	The Marshal

Produced by
Paul Malvern

Directed by
R. M. Bradbury

Story and screenplay by
Lindsley Parsons

a man with iron gray hair and cold blue eyes.

"Tried to double-cross your pals, eh?" the marshal sneered. "Just hand that bag over to me and the boys will relieve you of your guns."

John Middleton looked at the marshal, stunned by the accusation. Yet on the face of it, he realized the awkward position the events of the last few minutes had placed him in. The saloon had been robbed. He was standing outside, holding the loot. He was a stranger in the town. The men had gotten away from him.

"Two of them came in and made me open the safe," the bartender explained. "I guess this third one was a lookout—and he tried to pull a fast one, thinking the town deserted."

The sound of horses' hoofs broke in on the bartender's words. A posse had started for the two men that escaped. Midleton wet his lips and looked at the marshal with a peculiar expression on his face.

"I had nothing to do with the robbery," he said. "I am a stranger here and when I saw the two men coming out of the saloon, I simply tried to stop them."

Something in the eyes of the marshal caused Middleton to halt his explanation.

"Save that for your trial," the marshal sneered. "Come with me and I'll put you where you won't do any more robbing in this town. Our jail is pretty safe."

Two men had frisked Middleton of his guns. He was shoved across the street, in front of the marshal to the town jail.

Middleton wet his lips and looked at the marshal with a peculiar expression on his face.

The crowd followed behind, grumbling in a dangerous undertone. The marshal pushed Middleton through the door of the jail into the outer room.

"You can't believe that I had anything to do with that robbery," Middleton said to the marshal.

The marshal turned and faced him. The sneering look had left and his face had taken on a more friendly look. But his eyes were still cold and hard.

"I know why you came here, Middleton," the marshal said. "Did it ever occur to you that this robbery——"

He stopped abruptly and looked out the door. The crowd was still there, muttering threats. Middleton's eyes went to the door. He saw the crowd and beyond it his horse. The marshal had laid his two six-guns on the table.

Middleton moved with the speed of lightning. He knew the humor of the crowd and knew there was no chance of explanation. His body leaned forward slightly as his right fist went out in a blow that traveled faster than the eye. It caught the marshal on the side of the jaw, sending him to the floor in an inert heap.

In almost the same movement Middleton grabbed the two six-guns and turned to the door. He kicked it open and stepped out in front of the crowd. They backed away from the guns in his hands. The men were armed, but they knew before any gun could be drawn death would blaze at them.

Middleton stepped out in the street and backed slowly toward his horse. Within a few feet of it, he slipped the guns in his leather and made a flying leap for the saddle. He landed as his horse lunged forward, carrying him out of town at a breakneck speed.

Behind, the crowd came to life. Bullets whined over Middleton's head, but he lay close on the neck of his horse. When he got to the edge of Elk City, he heard the sound of hoofs behind him. He turned his pony down a wash ravine and headed for the badlands that lay to the west of town, a district where the posse could never trail him.

THREE days later Middleton followed a narrow trail that led out of the badlands into Pequeno Valley. His face was drawn and haggard. Although he was now only an hour's ride from Elk City, where the chase had started, it had taken him three days to escape the posse that followed him into the badlands.

Now he was a wanted man. It was a strange trick fate had played on him.

It was a campaign of terror . . . designed

His attack on the marshal and his escape had, to the public, been a complete acknowledgment of guilt in the holdup. Wherever he might go, the law would follow him.

But he wasted little time thinking of this as he rode for Pequeno Valley. He was headed for this valley when he had run into the holdup. And his visit to Pequeno Valley was more important than anything that might have happened to him.

A week before, he had received a mysterious letter from Hank Mason, an old friend of his father's and a man Middleton had known since childhood. The letter asked Middleton to come to Pequeno Valley at once. Mason had admitted that he needed help, but the nature of the trouble was not disclosed.

Middleton knew something about Pequeno Valley. He had heard of the wave of lawlessness that had struck the settlers of this valley. Cattle were raided, ranch houses burned and supply trains destroyed. It was a campaign of terror that seemed designed to drive the settlers from the valley. Hank Mason had settled there, and Middleton guessed that his call for help concerned this terror that hit the ranches.

A bullet exploded the dust in front of his horse, bringing Middleton to his senses with a snap. He dropped to the ground. Four men leaped out from behind a rock, guns leveled at him.

Middleton wet his lips. He knew from their appearances that they were not a part of a posse. His captors seized his arms and pinned them to his side. Realizing the futility of resistance under the circumstances, he submitted calmly to their rough handling.

"Where you headin'?" they barked.

"Pequeno Valley," Middleton replied.

"No you ain't!" came the curt reply. "We don't like strangers here. Get back on your horse and head back!"

Middleton turned toward his horse, put his right foot in the stirrup and started to swing back in the saddle, but as he did, he brought his right leg around in a quick movement that caught the leader flush on the chin, knocking him back against the other three men.

And in the next second, Middleton's horse raced away, headed up a narrow trail. His four would-be captors ran for their horses. The side trail took Middleton to the top of a cliff alongside a lake.

It stopped there, running into a rock barrier. Behind him he heard the hoofs of pursuing horses. He jumped to the ground, looked quickly for some avenue

to drive the settlers from the valley.

of escape from the trap. There was none.

The four men came in view, their guns roaring. Middleton raced to the edge of the cliff, saw there was water below, and dove for it. He hit with a loud splash as bullets from above cut the water all around him. He went down and down, the weight of his boots and guns carrying him far under.

HE struck out blindly, hoping that he was swimming for the other shore. His lungs ached and he was forced at last to go to the surface. His head came up. A bullet clipped the water near his face. He took a long, deep breath and went under again.

A few minutes later he came to shallow water. He had been forced to the surface several times, but the bullets no longer zipped in the water. He stood up and saw that he had swum across a lake. He looked at the cliff lining the opposite shore. There was no sign of his pursuers.

"Come out of there with your hands in the air," a voice said near him.

A grim, bitter smile came to Middleton's face. It was the voice of a girl. He wondered what would happen next. First the marshal and the posse. Then the four ambushers. And now a girl ordering him to come out of the water! He turned and he saw the girl, pretty and in her early twenties, walking out from behind a rock, holding a vigilant rifle in her hands. Middleton's hands again went over his head as he walked toward the girl.

"That's far enough to come," the girl warned. "Go back and tell 'Butch' Martin that the next man he sends on this ranch will get shot."

"I don't know Butch Martin," Middleton said easily, "and I don't know whose ranch I am on. I was riding for Pequeno Valley and four men tried to make me turn back."

Horses' hoofs broke in on his words. He and the girl turned and saw the four men racing for them.

"If you want to stay here and fight it out with them," Middleton nodded toward the oncoming party, "I'll stay with you. But it won't be pleasant."

Confidence left the girl's eyes and she looked at Middleton appealingly.

"We'll go to the ranch house," she said. "They won't follow there."

AT the ranch house, which was less than a mile away, Middleton said to the girl: "Now that you are sure I'm not one of Butch Martin's men, you might tell me your name."

"Anne Mason," was the quick reply.

"Anne Mason," Middleton repeated. "Are you related to Hank Mason?"

"He's my uncle. Why do you ask?"

"Because he sent for me. My name is John Middleton. Your uncle wrote me that he was in trouble and wanted me to help him."

"John Middleton!" Anne gasped. "I—I—I'm terribly sorry about the reception I gave you! You see I thought——"

"Where is your uncle?" Middleton interrupted. "Forget about how you welcomed me."

"Uncle Hank has disappeared," she answered. "It was about a week ago. He was working down in the wash all morning. He came up at noon very excited about something, but he wouldn't tell us what it was. We traced him and found that he had visited Mister Carter, the banker. After he left there, he was never seen again."

"Couldn't Carter give you any clue?"

"No. He said that uncle stopped at the bank and talked about renewing a mortgage and said he was going on to Elk City. He never got there."

Two horsemen came riding up. They were middle-aged men, obviously business men. One was heavy of build, with a face Middleton didn't like. He was Carter, the banker. The other was Emmett, the storekeeper.

He knew from their appearances that they were not part of a posse.

"Miss Mason," Emmett said when he dismounted, "I got bad news for you. There just ain't any supplies at the store. The wagon train was robbed again and I can't fill your order for supplies."

"We'll have to manage some way," Anne said wearily. "But I want you to meet Mister Middleton. He is a friend of Uncle Hank and he came here to help us."

Carter looked at Middleton with narrowed eyes and something like a mocking smile playing on his thin lips. Emmett greeted Middleton cordially.

"We need help," Emmett said with fervor. "The wagon train hasn't gotten through for three weeks and the settlers are close to starvation. Mister Carter, here, has his back to the wall, holding heavy mortgages on all the ranches. The ranchers can't get their cattle to market. He's going to be forced to foreclose."

"I shouldn't think that would be necessary," Middleton replied, "Mister Carter knows the ranchers have the cattle and his mortgages are safe. The circumstances——"

"I wish I could carry them," Carter

s

cket.

art of

reward

WARD

for the arrest of

JOHN MIDDLETON

WANTED FOR ROBBERY

Height—6 feet. Weight—180 pounds.
Hair—dark. Eyes—gray.

If apprehended, hold and communicate with United States Marshal, Elk City, Pine County.

Anne looked at Middleton, her eyes pleading with him to deny that poster. But he knew there was no denying it. It was there in black and white.

Anne said to Carter: "There is some mistake—surely."

"There isn't any mistake, Miss

"This man is one
They used that
m to get him on
to organize the
to market and
f the cattle would
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eached for his gun as he said
eton: "You'll come along with
we'll collect the reward and send
k to Elk City. Discovering your
will give us a chance to rush the
out of the valley before Butch
tin knows that we have found out
plan."

But Carter's hand never left the hol-ter. There was a roar from Middleton's gun. The bullet crashed against Carter's holster, knocking his gun from his hand.

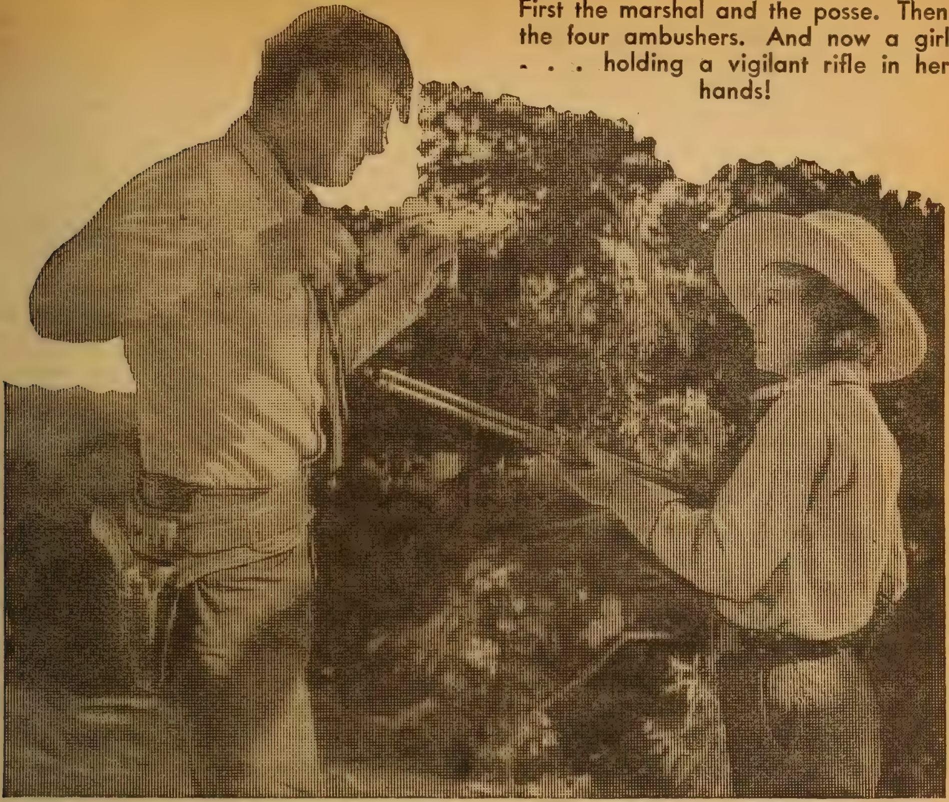
"Don't get in too big a hurry to take me back," Middleton said. "I'll go back to Elk City—but I'll go back myself—after I have found out what happened to Hank Mason!"

Emmett stared at Middleton's smoking weapon and made no move to draw. Carter was gripping his hand. The bullet had not hit flesh, but the shock of the impact had numbed his fingers.

Middleton turned and leaped on Carter's horse, giving Anne one last look. Her eyes met his and in them was a puzzled look that baffled Middleton.

HOURS later Middleton was following a wash trail that led into the badlands. He let the horse walk slowly. He watched the rocks and the trail closely, as if half expecting someone to appear.

Behind him, in Pequeno Valley, the ranchers were herding their cattle for a quick drive to the market, believing that they might outwit Butch Martin. The news of the reward for Middleton had spread over the valley like wildfire, but the ranchers did not bother to organize



First the marshal and the posse. Then the four ambushers. And now a girl . . . holding a vigilant rifle in her hands!

a posse. They needed all their men for the cattle round-up.

A man appeared on the trail suddenly, directly in front of Middleton. John stopped his horse as the man came up to him.

"The Big Boss wants to see you," the man said.

Middleton smiled as he answered: "I don't know what you're talking about. I don't know him and he doesn't know me."

"Maybe if I told you he was looking for John Middleton, you'd understand."

"That's different," Middleton agreed.

Then without a word, Middleton dismounted, led his horse behind a rock, and followed the man. Middleton sensed he was going to the hideout of Butch Martin, the man behind the reign of terror in the valley and probably in on the disappearance of Hank Mason. The man took Middleton through a hidden ravine, into a box canyon. They crossed this canyon and entered a long cave entrance.

Five minutes later, they arrived at the gang's cabin. Outside, a man was sitting on a wooden stool, a heavy set man, with a black mustache and a scar that ran down the side of his face. Middleton knew that he was facing Butch Martin.

"I sent for you, Middleton," Martin said, "because I figure you might want some protection and you can be of use to us."

Middleton looked at Martin closely, as if something about him was strangely familiar.

He said: "You've got a nice layout here, Martin. Nobody would ever find this hiding place. What's it worth to me to throw in with you?"

"It's worth," Martin said coldly, "just what we want to give you. I think you'll be throwing in with us without arguing. We could turn you over to the marshal——"

"I don't think you'd do that," John cut in.

"No, we wouldn't," Martin admitted. "But we're going to see that you don't give us any trouble. We happen to know that Hank Mason sent for you—and we happen to have the two men here that pulled that holdup you're wanted for. We know you weren't in on that job. I don't know your game, but whatever it is, you won't work it!"

BEFORE Middleton could reach for his guns, two men grabbed him from the rear and threw him to the ground.

"Tie him up and throw him in the back room," Martin ordered. "The herd is starting to move and we have to get staked out to the rim of the pass to take care of them. We'll take care of this hombre when we get back."

Middleton's wrists and legs were tied and he was dragged across the floor and thrown into a dark room. He landed on his face. The door closed behind the men that had handled him.

A voice in the darkness near Middleton whispered: "Who's that?"

"John Middleton."

"John Middleton!" the man cried. "How did they get you? I'm Mason—Hank Mason!"

Middleton threw himself over on his side and peered through the darkness. He saw the faint outline of his companion lying on the floor.

"Mason!" he cried. "I had hoped you would be alive."

"They've held me prisoner for a week," Mason answered. "They tried to get me to sign over my ranch to them. They tortured me. I knew the minute I signed, they would kill me."

"Martin and his gang are leaving now to raid the ranchers' trail herd," Middleton said. "Crawl over here. Between us, we can bite our ropes loose."

It took over a half hour of painful work for Middleton and Mason to free themselves of their bonds. When they did, Middleton crawled to the door and listened. The sound of a man walking back and forth in the outer room came to him. Middleton had no way of knowing whether this was a lone outlaw left behind to watch the prisoners or not.

He had to take the chance. He pushed the door open slowly, crawled into the outer room. The man's back was to him. Middleton sprang, landing on the outlaw's back and sending him to the floor in a crushed heap. A right to the jaw sent his body limp. Mason was at Middleton's side, tying the man up.

John jumped to his feet, ears strained to hear some sound. There was none and he knew that the lone sentinel was the only outlaw left in the hideout. Mason dragged the man into the back room and closed the door. Middleton went to a rifle box and broke the lock. He took out two rifles, handing Mason one. Then he grabbed a handful of ammunition.

But as he did, something in the locker caught his attention. It was a small piece of rubber. He felt it and then noticed a hat lying near it. He turned to Mason and said: "There isn't much mystery now who is behind Butch Martin. But we haven't any time to waste on that. We've got to stop them from raiding the cattle."

"I'll ride to Elk City to get the marshal," Mason suggested.

Middleton looked at him with something like a grim smile on his lips. He had had no chance to tell his old friend about his experience in Elk City.

But he replied without hesitation: "You get the marshal—I'll handle Martin's gang until you get back!"

AN hour later Middleton rode one of the outlaw's horses, which he had taken from the hideout, up a steep trail that led to the top of the rim overlooking the cattle trail below. It was late in the afternoon. He knew that Mason, even with mad riding, would just be reaching Elk City. It would take a good hour for the marshal and his men to get back.

And in that hour, Butch Martin and his men could stampede and kill off all the cattle that would pass below in a few minutes. Coming up on the rim at the rear of Martin and his men, Middleton would have the first shot. Yet he realized that the first shot would be the only advantage he would have.

One man against twenty killers! The odds were absurd and hopeless. But he did not hesitate. On the top of the rim, he dismounted and crawled on his stomach across the flat rocks. He could see Martin's men hiding behind rocks, waiting for the herd to appear before charging down on them to kill cattle and ranchers.

The ranchers would have no chance. Butch Martin's men would be firing from cover and far above the ranchers. There was a commotion among Martin's men below him. The faint sound of cattle moving drifted into the pass!

He was on his hands and knees, scuffling over the rocks as fast as he could. He jumped to his feet. He saw an outlaw move up, send a shot down into the cut below, the shot that would be the signal for the general attack.

Middleton's gun roared. He did not shoot the outlaw in the back—that was not his way of fighting. The bullet from his rifle knocked the gun from the man's hand.

The next second the rim was alive with snarling, infuriated outlaws. Middleton dropped to his stomach. Bullets chipped the rocks all around him. He was fighting face to face with the outlaws, now, and he shot to kill. Twice his rifle roared. Two men grabbed their throats and went to the rocks.

A bullet cut through the flesh of his shoulder, sending a sharp stinging pain down his right side. Another caught him in the left, numbing every part of his body. He rolled behind a rock, bullets splattering rock dust over him.

Two men grabbed him from the rear and threw him to the ground.

He turned, firing three times from his hip with a six-gun.

A man screamed weirdly. Another went to his knees. A bullet clipped the rock near Middleton's head. He knew he was fighting against split seconds. He might escape those bullets once or twice—but never the third time!

HE saw the heavy body of Butch Martin rise up from behind a rock. Butch Martin! It flashed through Middleton's pain-racked brain that he might use Butch Martin for his own protection. Middleton crawled back from the rock, holding his rifle at arms' length and firing to keep the outlaws' attention on the rock. Butch Martin darted from cover and fell behind a rock closer to Middleton.

Middleton backed away inches more, getting clear of the rock. He went up on his left knee. His right leg hung limply at his side. He drove his body forward with his left leg. The shove sent him clear of his rock and sprawled him across the one concealing Butch Martin.

Two bullets caught Middleton somewhere in the flesh as he made this wild leap.

He slid down on the shoulders of Butch Martin, sending the outlaw to the rocks in an awkward heap. Martin's rifle clattered on the rocks as it fell from his grasp. Middleton sent a right to Martin's jaw. It connected and Martin came up with a bellow of rage, sending left and right at Middleton's face.

They landed, but John rolled his head to take the sting from the blows. The firing around them ceased. Martin's men could not fire at his desperate attacker without hitting their boss. Middleton caught another blow. It sent him crashing down. A feeling of sick weakness spread over his body. His right leg burned now as if some one had seared it with a red hot iron.

Gathering his strength once more, he came up, plunging his right fist deep into Martin's stomach. Martin doubled up. Middleton sent another right that caught the outlaw flush on the chin. Martin went down in an inert heap.

Men were rushing toward him and Middleton. Middleton twisted Martin's body around, yanked his six-gun out and fired at the men. They darted behind rocks. He heaved Martin's body up as a barricade. The outlaw was groaning and regaining consciousness. John cracked him over the head with the butt of the six-gun and the big man groaned and his body quivered.

Martin's men were surrounding him by this time. He knew he couldn't hold them off from all sides. His senses were whirling crazily. There was no pain in his body now—no feeling whatever. The rocks were moving madly in front of him.

Some one was crawling up behind him. He turned. There were three outlaws within a few feet of him. He sent a bullet at one of them. Others were coming toward him from the front, and still more were at his sides.

He saw one of the men raise a gun. Middleton knew if he fired, others would be all over him from the rear and sides. He saw the man's finger start to press the trigger. Everything had suddenly slowed up in his mind now. The lightninglike gesture of pulling a trigger took hours, it seemed. All strength had left his arms. He tried to raise his gun but couldn't.

He saw the finger of the man press the trigger. There was a deafening explosion. And Middleton remembered no more.

HE came to slowly, with his thoughts a jumbled mass. He was lying on a rock. He wondered if he were dead. He should have been, yet he heard men talking over him. He opened his eyes.

The marshal of Elk City was looking down at him. The marshal from Elk

City! Middleton remembered everything in a flash. He looked from the marshal to the others. Hank Mason was standing there, too, and at his side was Anne.

Butch Martin was guarded by three men. His henchmen were lined up against a rock wall, with a posse covering them.

Middleton looked up at the marshal. The eyes of the two men met and both smiled.

"Well, son," the marshal said. "I guess our little plan worked, even if you did have to get your skin filled with lead."

"Plan?" Anne cried. "You mean that —that—John—Mister Middleton isn't a——?"

"You see, Miss Mason," the marshal explained, "Middleton and I have known each other for years. When he got the letter from your uncle he was on his way to see me. He happened to run into a holdup. Well, you understand, we've been up against a pretty tough proposition here, fighting this reign of terror.

"We didn't know who was behind it and there wasn't any way to find out, working in the dark. So when I saw John Middleton fighting them holdup men, a plan came to my mind. We needed an undercover man and if Middleton was wanted by the law, he could get somewhere. I arrested him as an accomplice. We didn't have much time to discuss our plan, but I threw him out a hint what was in my mind. He took the hint—and a mighty hard wallop at my jaw to get the guns I laid out for him!

"I sent the reward notice to this valley to give John a chance to work his way into the gang. Of course, the way it turned out, there wasn't any use doing it like that. He just worked from the outside in, and busted them up single handed. But the job's done now. All we have to do is find out who's behind this gang."

JOHN MIDDLETON raised himself up and looked at Butch Martin.

"You're going to know who the real man behind this reign of terror is," he said to the marshal, "if you yank that scar and mustache off Butch Martin's face. I found part of a rubber scar in a locker back in the hideout, and a hat I had seen before. I thought there was something about Martin looked familiar —and there was."

The marshal turned on Butch Martin and yanked at his scar and mustache. They both came off and the marshal was looking at Carter, the banker.

"Hank Mason," Middleton explained, "found a trace of gold on his ranch. Carter knew about it and he wanted to run the settlers out of the valley and get possession of all the land so he'd have all the gold. He started his reign of terror and kidnaped Hank to keep him from talking."

Middleton fell back. The effort had weakened him. His eyes met Anne Mason.

Hank Mason said: "Anne and I will be needing some one to share our good fortune, Middleton—and I think Anne kinda wants you to be that lucky person."

Anne smiled down at Middleton. He smiled back as he murmured: "I don't want your gold—but maybe, I might want something else you have."

He could whip angry seas into submission. But could he defeat treachery as well? Read

DANGEROUS WATERS

for Jack Holt's latest and most dynamic role!

RED hell was raging on *The Star Of Brazil.* The ship was afire. There was no harbor along that jagged storm-tossed coast, studded with knife-sharp crags that would rip the bottom out of the stanchest boat ever launched! Sure death there, and flaming death below deck where devouring tongues of fire licked at the stacked cargo bales.

The great, gray waves that swept the ship hissed as they struck the fiery-hot steel plates of her sides.

And in his cabin above this inferno, Captain Cochrane lay dying.

Down in the blazing hold, First Mate Jim Marlowe, now acting captain, a tough sailor with dynamite in either fist and a jaw of granite below his square-cut, black mustache, fought the roaring flames. He drove the fire-fighting gang like a man possessed—into the hottest of it—chopping at smoldering cases with savage swings of his axe—dragging the heavy hose forward!

Suddenly there came a roar like an earthquake. The ship shook under their feet. Oily black smoke loaded with darts of flame poured on the men in the hold. They were stifling—choking!

They dropped the hose, ran for the hatch. Then Marlowe was among them! His left fist hooked the leading fugitive high on the cheek staggering him back. A smashing right to the jaw floored the next. He dragged the bleeding men to their feet and hurled them back toward the blistering fire. Coughing with the strangling oil smoke, he roared at them:

"Get back there, damn you! Get back there and fight!"

He snatched the hose from the deck. Not waiting to see who followed him, he charged toward the flames. Closer and closer! The brass nozzle catching the

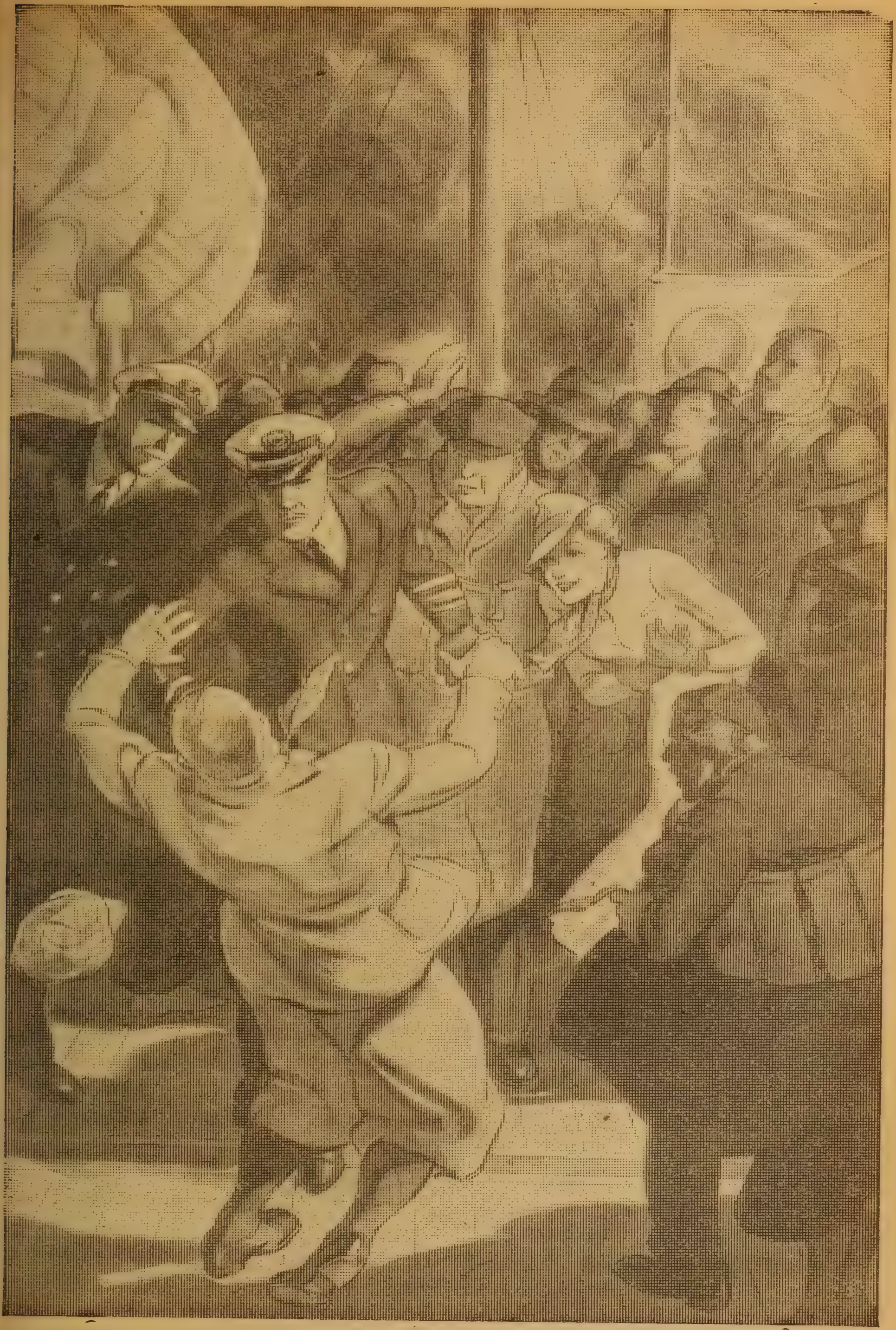
THE CAST

JACK HOLT	Jim Marlowe
ROBERT ARMSTRONG	"Dusty" Johnson
CHARLES MURRAY	McDuffy
DIANA GIBSON	Ruth Denning
Dewey Robinson	"Chips"
Willard Robertson	Mac Keechie

Produced by Fred S. Meyer
Directed by Lambert Hillyer
Story from "Glory Hole," by Theodore Reeves
Screenplay by Richard Schayer and Hazel Jamieson

UNIVERSAL PRODUCTION

A fictionization of the Universal Picture of the same title.



"I demand my rights!" Brunch spluttered. . . . He got them instantly!

terrible heat, blistered his hands, but he hardly felt it. There was a mystery to fight here as well as a fire. He had stacked that cargo himself. There was nothing that should have caught aflame by itself——

ABOVE his head, in the passengers' quarters, panic reigned. Smoke at last was creeping in. Women screamed and fainted. The only one who kept a brave heart was beautiful Ruth Denning. Her father had commanded the old *Gibraltar* of this same line. He had pulled Jim Marlowe out of the forecastle, taught him navigation and given him his first stripes.

"I've had enough of this," Ruth heard a loud voice cut through the babble of the frightened passengers. "I'm going to Captain Cochrane and demand that they abandon this ship and take the passengers ashore in the boats."

Ruth recognized the speaker—a stout, pompous man named Brunch.

"We're only twenty miles off Boscos Island," Brunch continued. "They can put us ashore there and radio for a ship to pick us up. You agree with me, don't you?" he asked the others.

They all agreed, eagerly. "All right," Brunch said, "leave it to me. I'll fix it."

Made brave by desperation, he fought his way along the wave-swept, hot deck. As he reached the foot of the bridge ladder, a tall figure in a seaman's uniform barred his way—"Dusty" Johnson, Jim Marlowe's best pal.

"Can't go on the bridge, sir," Dusty was polite but very firm. "Against orders!"

Purple with rage Brunch roared at Dusty to get out of his way. He shouted up the ladder:

"Nelson! Mister Nelson!" An officer appeared. "I want to see the captain and this sailor doesn't know who I am."

A minute later he stood by the berth where Captain Cochrane lay. Callous to the sick man's pain, he barked his demands as though he owned the ship. Sickness had shattered the captain, weakened his will. Maybe he *should* abandon the ship and land the passengers. He looked at Nelson.

"What's the latest on the fire?" he asked feebly.

"Still out of control, sir," Nelson answered, glaring resentfully at Brunch.

"Very well," the captain gave in. "Swing the boats out and send for Mister Marlowe!"

BUT when Marlowe tramped into the cabin, red-eyed and grimed from the fire and smoke, it was too late. Captain Cochrane was dead.

Marlowe's jaw set grimly. This put the job squarely up to him. Fifteen years with the line and now he was captain commanding. But he didn't relish its coming this way, through the death of a man he admired and loved. Then, furiously, he decided he'd bring the ship in for Captain Cochrane if he had to put the fire out with his bare hands! He whirled on Nelson.

"What's going on here?" he pointed to the crew swinging out the boats.

"Skipper's orders," Nelson answered. "We're beaching the passengers on Boscos Island."

"No, we're not!" Marlowe snapped. "The skipper's passed on. I'm in command now, Mister Nelson. Secure the boats. Order the men back to stations. Send the passengers back to their quarters."

"Aye, aye, sir!" Nelson saluted. The ship phone rang. He handed the instrument to Marlowe. "The chief engineer wants you," he said and left to carry out his orders.

The chief engineer was another pal of his, an old Irishman named McDuffy. "Mac" could not resist the temptation to take machinery apart, but he was a great engineer and brave as a lion. Marlowe told him of the skipper's death. Then:

"Hold your gang on the job!" he ordered Mac. He returned to the boat deck.

Huddled in a terror-stricken group, the passengers were already assembled by the boats. They milled around Nelson and the sailors. Marlowe smashed through the packed mass of people.

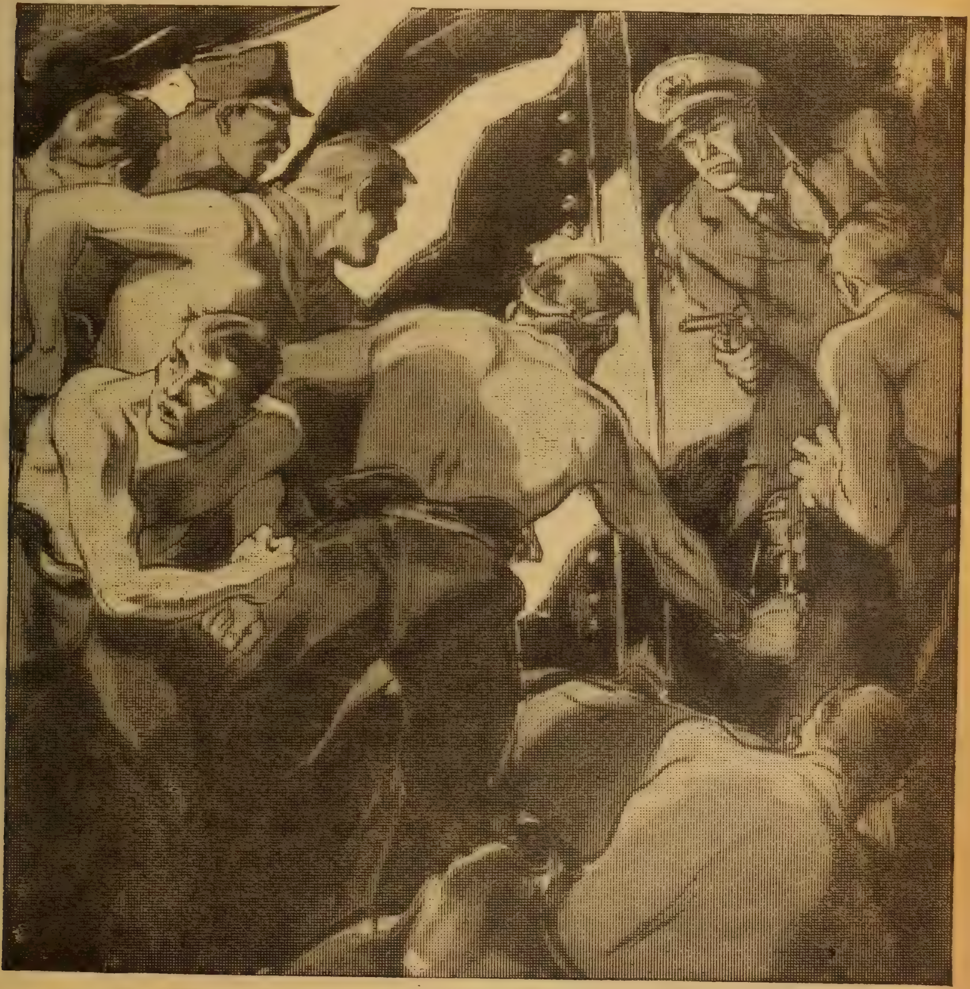
"Secure those boats and stand by!" he shouted. Then he turned to the passengers. "There is no need to abandon the ship, ladies and gentlemen. You would be in far more danger in the small boats than you are here. Go back to your cabins."

The passengers protested. Some resisted as the stewards courteously shepherded them back indoors. Dusty Johnson watched, grinning, as Simeon D. Brunch shoved his way up to Marlowe.

"This is an outrage," Brunch exploded. "Captain Cochrane promised to set us ashore."

"Captain Cochrane is dead," Marlowe answered, teeth clenched. "I'm in command."

"I don't care who's in command," Brunch shrilled. "We're going in the boats!"



"Stand back!" he barked. . . . "Stand back, or I'll let you have it!"

"I hope you won't make it necessary for me to confine you to your cabin, Mister Brunch."

"I'll have your license taken away for this!" Brunch snarled.

Marlowe cut him short: "You're interfering with the discipline of this ship. Go to your cabin!"

"I demand my rights!" Brunch spluttered.

He got them instantly. So fast that no one knew what happened till it was over. Twice, Marlowe's right fist lashed out and landed on Brunch's jaw. The blows cracked like a shot. He tottered, sprawled, limp on the deck.

At an order from his commander, Dusty, still grinning, dragged the unconscious Brunch away. Marlowe turned to find Ruth Denning at his elbow. The scowl of anger left his face.

"Hello, Ruth," he greeted her. "I'm afraid your father wouldn't approve of that kind of seamanship, but it seemed the only thing to do."

"No," she answered, "Dad would have hit him with a belaying pin." She shook Jim's hand. "Congratulations! It's sad about Captain Cochrane, but it should mean a fourth stripe for you, Jim. You'll make a great skipper, Jim, and—" she looked down "—Dad will be so proud of you!"

A brisk step beside them. Marlowe turned sharply as a young officer came up, saluting.

"Trouble with the black gang, sir," he reported. "Mister McDuffy reports he can't keep them below."

Marlowe sprang into action. Hurrying Ruth inside to a place of safety, he rushed for the gangway leading below decks, his fists knotted so tight the knuckles stood out white. Dusty Johnson, coming back from stowing Brunch in his cabin, ran after Marlowe, eager for battle!

DOWN below, his back to the door, old Mac faced a yelling mob of fear-crazed men with nothing but an empty gun and courage. Naked to the waist, their huge muscles tightening, the husky oilers and stokers, crouched for a rush. They must get out, away from those terrible flames! They charged. Mac slugged at naked chests, sweaty jaws. A heavy fist crashed against his head—he was going down!

Then suddenly Jim Marlowe was beside him. Like a tiger, his fists slashing in short jabs and hooks, he leaped at the rebellious gang. A man went down from a left to the jaw. Jim felt a rib crack under his right fist. Swinging at every face he saw, he fought a circle clear in front of him. Then he drew his gun and faced the furious men, his eyes flaming.

"Stand back!" he barked, leveling the revolver. "Stand back, or I'll let you have it!"

Back in the crowd, a big stoker hurled a heavy steel wrench. Marlowe half saw it coming. He ducked, but not quickly enough. The steel end struck his temple! Down he went, his gun slipping from his fingers!

Yelling in triumph, the men charged in to stamp him to death, but a new figure burst into the fight—Dusty!

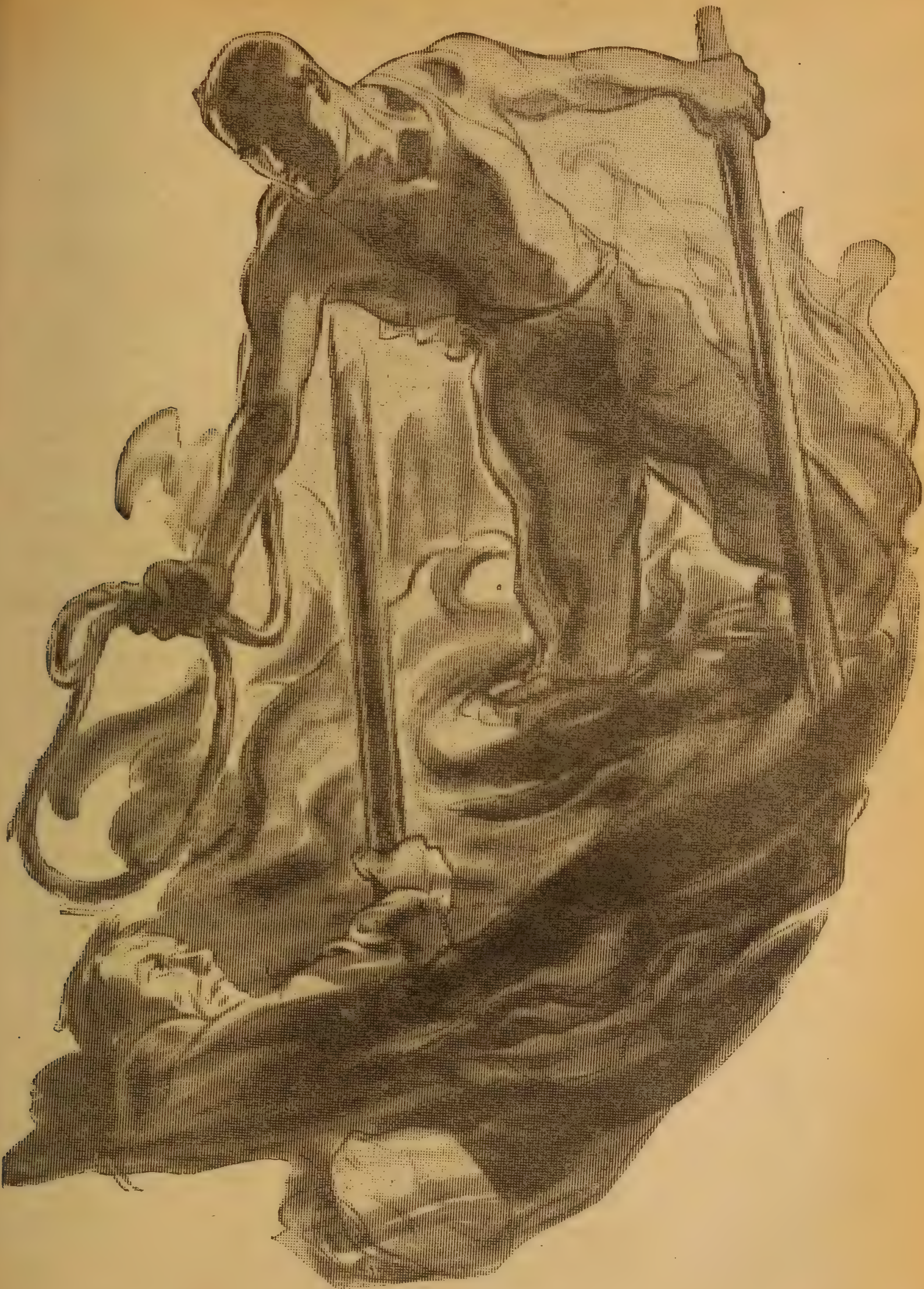
His teeth set in a grin of fury, he drove the stokers back with a rain of heavy rights and lefts. The chief engineer rallied and sprang to help him. Inch by inch they slugged the desperately fighting firemen back—back further—down to the bulkhead door—into the hold finally, as Marlowe staggered to his feet and helped them slam shut the metal door and lock it behind the defeated men.

Marlowe thrust a raw-knuckled hand out and squeezed Dusty's bleeding fingers.

"Thanks, Johnson," he said approvingly.

"Aw, that's all right, skipper," Dusty grinned, embarrassed at the praise. "I enjoyed it."

"It wasn't a bad scrap at that," Mar-



He fought his way to Dusty's side. . . . He got a loop around them—another!

lowe agreed. He wheeled on the others. "Double the fire and engine room watch. Mister Nelson, take charge of the fire and keep me informed."

He went to his cabin to clean up. Before he had finished shaving, an officer appeared.

"Mister Nelson reports that the fire is out and the pumps are clearing the forehold, sir."

"Very well," Marlowe replied. "Give Mister Nelson my compliments. Tell the purser to advise the passengers."

Marlowe's voice was calm but his eyes were gleaming. Victory! This meant a captaincy. Well, he would teach Johnson navigation as Captain Denning had taught him. He would take him on as his third mate when he got his first command. Good boy, that Dusty kid. He'd make a sailor. But that would come all in good time. The thing to do now was to get *The Star Of Brazil* safe home to port. And, perhaps, solve that fire mystery.

MARLOWE got her in safely but the mystery of the fire remained unsolved. The findings of the U. S. Steamboat Inspectors' investigation left the cause as much in the dark as ever. While commending all the crew, especially Marlowe and Seaman Johnson, for gallantry despite their knowledge of the mutiny, the investigators blamed the fire on spontaneous combustion. Jim was not so sure, but he said nothing.

He took Dusty home with him and started tutoring him for his examination in navigation. Everything went well. Jim felt sure of getting command of *The Star Of Brazil* when she was ready to sail again.

Dusty passed his examination. *The Brazil* would sail in a few days, and he would be its third mate! He waited impatiently for Jim to come home so that he could tell him the good news. Then the door opened.

"Third Mate Johnson reporting for duty, sir," Dusty saluted with his ready grin.

"Good work, kid," Marlowe said. "Congratulations. I knew you'd make it." But his voice lacked its usual enthusiastic ring. The words fell heavily from his lips.

"Thanks for dragging me out of the fo'c's'le, skipper," said Dusty as they shook hands. "I'll never forget what I owe you."

"If we ever ship together again, I'll be cheering for you to make the next grade."

"*If* we ever ship together!" Dusty could not understand. "I was hoping you'd take me on *The Brazil*."

"I'm not taking *The Brazil*." Marlowe's voice was grim. "The company turned me down. I don't get the ship. Somebody had to be the goat for that fire, so they picked me. They found proof that cases of smokeless powder, meant for some revolutionists were shipped under false invoice and stowed in the forward hold. The first mate is held responsible for cargo stowage, so I'm it." Marlowe shrugged, and lit his battered old black briar pipe.

"Well, I'll be——" growled Dusty. "Then you're going out as first mate again?"

"I'm afraid not," Jim said. "That passenger I punched had an awful drag with the owners. By the way," he went on, "you're the third officer on *The Brazil* when she sails, anyway. I made them do that much."

"Thanks, that's swell," answered Dusty. "But I'd rather wait and ship with you, skipper."

"I may not be able to get a berth for a long time," said Jim, touched by the boy's loyalty.

"Then there'll be two of us," muttered Dusty stubbornly.

"You're a darned fool!" So deeply moved he could say no more, Marlowe squeezed Dusty's arm.

THAT Dusty *was* a fool, although a brave fool to stick to a blacklisted man, was evident when they set out to look for work. There were no jobs for them.

The sailors they had so roughly handled in the mutiny aboard *The Star Of Brazil* had many friends along the San Francisco waterfront. Black looks and muttered abuse that did not dare become too loud, followed them as they walked toward the Seamen's Institute one night.

In the corner of the waiting room of this building, in the sailors' section, railed off from the officers', sat the brawny bully from *The Brazil's* engine room who had struck Marlowe with the wrench. He was denouncing the former first mate to a group of cronies.

But there were others in that room, on the officers' side of the fence, who were more dangerous, murderous. They conversed in low tones—a boozy ship's officer, Bill MacKeechie, and Heegan, a ratlike ship agent.

"It's a dirty job," MacKeechie was objecting. "The *Gibraltar* is still a good ship——"

"She's insured for $200,000," whispered Heegan, "and with cargoes as scarce as they are she loses money for us every trip she stays afloat. Now here's the final order. Wait until you're off the coast of Ecuador. Then watch your chance."

A roar from the engine room bully made the plotters look toward the door. The hoodlum had seen Marlowe and Dusty come in. He swaggered up to them, sneering as his gang laughed.

"Who's this?" Marlowe asked Dusty, coolly, looking the sailor over like a total stranger. Then as Dusty told him, "Oh, you're the man I had blacklisted as a cowardly mutineer and would-be assassin, I believe. Well, what do you want?"

"I don't want nothin' from you—or him, either," the man snarled. "I'm just tellin' yer what I think of yer an' yer can take it or leave it."

"I have business inside," Marlowe snapped. "When I come out, if it's trouble you want, follow me to the street and I'll accommodate you." He whirled on his heel, with Dusty beside him.

Heegan's watching eyes narrowed. He had his chief engineer; old McDuffy, living right there in the Institute. Now he had found the perfect victim for his plot—the right man to captain the ill-fated *Gibraltar*. At Heegan's nod, McKeechie arose and approached Marlowe who was scanning the bulletin board.

"How'd you like to take out the old *Gibraltar?*" he asked. Marlowe's eyes lighted up.

"The *Gibraltar?* I stood my first watch as an officer on her bridge and four years in her fo'c's'le! Where's she bound?"

When he heard that the ship would carry a cargo of nitrates bound for Valparaiso, Chile, would have his old pal, Mac, for engineer he signed at once. Dusty signed as third mate. McKeechie was already set for the first mate's post. Then Heegan introduced the gang outside to the new skipper as his crew. Marlowe stopped in front of his old mutineer from *The Brazil.*

"I don't want any part of this man," he said, his eyes like bits of ice.

"You can't get rid of me," the bully growled. "I'm signed by the master." Then, infuriated by the laughter of his friends, he pulled his hairy fist back of his shoulder and launched a swing at Marlowe's head.

Marlowe, ducked, weaved in close. His fist flashed out, and smashed to the bully's heart. Down pitched the man on his face like a slaughtered ox!

Marlowe's eyes swept the others. Not a word from them. They knew their master. Meekly, at his nod, they followed him out.

WHEN the little freighter pulled out of the dock and started on her way to Valparaiso, the men still remembered that cannon shot of a punch. They showed great respect to Marlowe's face. But behind his back, there were many who sneered at him. The fall guy! They were in the plot. They had their orders from McKeechie. McKeechie was the *real* skipper on this trip. He would give them the signal, and then——

Marlowe was proud of his new job. Up the hawse pipe of the *Gibraltar* and now her skipper! How happy Ruth and Captain Denning had looked as they had seen him off!

Down to the equator it had been a quiet voyage. They crossed the equator at night. There was the usual skylarking at crossing the line. Marlowe watched it. But he did not realize that the reveling was to hide the devil's work going on down in the black hold. He could not see nor hear it, far up in the bow.

A man crouched there, with no light except from his blow torch. He heated a rivet red hot. Then he took his cold steel chisel. He placed the edge against the rivet head. A tap of his hammer—tap—tap, tap, tap. The rivet head dropped off. He heated another rivet head and tapped it off. Another—another——

It was "Chips," the carpenter, right hand man of McKeechie. For a long time he burnt and tapped. He worked on plate after plate in the old ship's side, until seven had been loosened. They barely hung on. In the quiet sea now running there was no real danger. But one good, smashing drive of stormy greybacks and the whole side would be ripped away like paper!

McKeechie waited his chance. Then it came. Early the next morning, Chips walked up to Marlowe and reported a serious leak, his face a mask of perfect innocence. There was three and a half feet of water in the hold, with a gain of one foot in the past hour.

Marlowe seized the speaking tube. He called Mac.

"Get the pumps going right away, chief," he ordered. "There's a bad leak in the fore hold. Yes, right away! What do you *think* I mean?"

He gritted his teeth at Mac's reply. The chief with his obsession to take machinery apart, had dismantled the pumps! It would be hours before they could fight the leak!

Marlowe rushed on deck to examine the weather. The air was still, deadly still.

As he reached the bridge, his fears were realized. High over the horizon piled masses of giant clouds, high as mountains, pitch black. They came on with terrible speed, quickly blotting out the sunny, blue sky. A hurricane! Marlowe set his jaw like flint as McKeechie approached.

"Plenty trouble in that sky, captain," he said. The man was nervous, conscience stricken.

"The pumps are holding their own," Marlowe lied grimly. Only hand pumps were working.

"We're only thirty miles off shore now, sir."

"There's no harbor for five hundred miles."

"We could go ashore in the life boats," urged McKeechie eagerly.

"Abandon ship?" rasped Marlowe. "We'll hold our course. I don't abandon ships easily, Mister!" Marlowe swung about as the second mate reported that Mac was on the speaking tube.

What Jim heard over that tube would have sickened a weaker man with despair. It filled him with fighting fury. The pumps had been wrecked—jimmied with a crowbar, Mac reported. They could not be repaired!

"KEEP your gang working down there till you're neck deep," Jim roared to Mac. Then he faced the frightened

McKeechie and the second mate. "The pumps have been jimmied—broken by a crowbar. It's a racket, Misters, a racket to sink her for the insurance and us with her!"

"Hadn't we better head for shore and beach her before she goes down under us?"

"No!" Marlowe flared at McKeechie. "I haven't lost a ship yet and I'm not going to lose the old *Gibraltar*. Where's Mister Johnson?"

"His watch below, sir," answered McKeechie.

"Break him out," ordered Marlowe. "Send him and Chips into the fore hold to see what can be done about stopping the leaks. Man the hand pumps and post a guard at the life boats. When the sea rises, turn around and back her into it. That will take the strain off the bow plates. Meanwhile, secure everything for a big blow!"

DUSTY had been restless on his watch, eager to help Marlowe fight the danger to the ship. When McKeechie brought him his orders, he swung into action at once. He told Chips to get his tool kit. Then they went down into the hold.

As soon as they reached the lower passage the seriousness of the leak was evident. They had to fight their way step by step through rusty water, knee deep. The steel bulkhead door leading to the bow section of the fore hold was open. Tons of water came rushing through in a mad torrent!

Plunging through the foaming flood, Dusty splashed into this bow section. It was a little triangular room of steel plates with an iron ladder leading to the closed manhole of the deck above. A dingy electric bulb gave dim light. Dusty flashed his electric torch over the trembling hull plates. He turned sharply on Chips, frowning.

"Someone's used a blow torch on those plates, Chips!" he cried. "Any idea who it might be?"

"Can't imagine, sir," replied Chips blandly, but Dusty was suspicious.

"Give me your chisel!" he ordered.

The carpenter hesitated a second. Then he handed over his chisel. Dusty fitted it so that its nicks fitted some of the marks around a missing rivet head. His own chisel branded Chips as the guilty man!

But Chips had been watching every move Dusty made. As he saw the chisel fit into the marks he took a heavy hammer from his kit and swung it at the third mate's head.

Dusty turned to face him. That move saved his life. The hammer head flashed by his face. The two men crashed together, smashed against the steel sides! The shock broke them apart. Dusty rammed a short jolt into the carpenter's midriff. He jerked the same fist up the other's chest with all his strength, flush to the jaw. Chips went down, flat on his back, his head striking with a sickening thud.

Dusty bent over him, tried to lift him. He saw the carpenter's eyes open, saw the hammer swinging! He tried to duck. Then everything went dark. He fell to the upward curving floor; only his head and shoulders above the rapidly rising water.

CHIPS waded from the room. Pushing with all his strength he managed to get the steel bulkhead door closed. He tightened the dogs on the door, locking it securely. Dusty would drown like a rat in that metal trap!

He hurried to the upper deck. When he reached the open, the gale nearly knocked him down. The hurricane was raging.

Marlowe was turning the ship around to back her into it. He whirled on Chips.

"Where's Mister Johnson?" he blazed.

"He took the forward section and sent me aft, sir," Chips answered.

"We better look in the forward hold," said McKeechie uneasily as Chips glared at him. "He may be in trouble."

"Take the bridge, Mister Olson," Marlowe ordered the second mate sharply. Then, "You men follow me!"

Together they raced across the storm-ridden deck, hanging onto anything in reach as the mighty seas crashed over them. Marlowe tore the manhole cover off. He flashed his light down into the dimness. There he was—Dusty, the water almost to his lips, clinging to the ladder!

"You know about this Mister Mate!" Jim shouted at McKeechie. "If Johnson dies, you'll swing higher than a kite!"

"Not me, captain. I didn't do it!" babbled the shaking mate. The cowardice that allowed him to plan mutiny now worked against him. "Murder ain't in my line. This was Chips' job."

"You lie!"

Chips, screaming the words, leaped at McKeechie. Marlowe grabbed him by the throat, shook him like a rat and hurled him into the arms of the crew. His face blazed with rage.

"Put him in irons!" he snapped. Then he whirled on McKeechie as Chips was dragged away. "As for you—take off that uniform and stay forward with the crew! You're no longer an officer of this ship!"

"You can't do that to me," McKeechie whined.

"I can't, eh?" Jim flamed. "If we live through this job, I'll do more than that! I'll send you to jail for twenty years!" Then, to the men, "Give me a line. I'm going down to get Johnson!"

"WHY not open the bulkhead door, sir," asked a sailor, "and let the water into the ship?"

"The rush of the water would dash Johnson's brains out. If the manhole closes after me, I'll lash us both to the ladder and if any of you've got the guts you can open the bulkhead door then."

Watching his chance as the ship tossed, he dropped down through the manhole—down into the swashing water! The impact nearly knocked the breath out of him. He fought his way to Dusty's side. The waves in the room tore at them like live things. He got a loop of the rope around them—another—they were fast to the ladder! Then he heard McKeechie's voice from above:

"I'm going down to open the bulkhead door!"

"You'll kill yourself," shouted Marlowe.

"What's the difference?" came the reply. "I'm too old for prison, Jim! So long!"

Hours seemed to pass, but Jim realized that it was only a few short minutes. Yet he could tell by the motion of the vessel that, even in that short time, Olson had turned her back into the wind at last. Then he heard the smash of a hammer on the bulkhead.

It was McKeechie. The crew had let him down on a rope. He swung a mighty sledge against the bolts. The tons of water massed against the door held them immovable.

Like a madman, he battered again at the bolts. One gave a little—just an inch. Water squirted through. Another inch—then it was open!

Water sprayed McKeechie as he smashed at the second bolt. It was giving. Another blow now—just one more! Then he must jump, quick! The hammer struck. The bolt gave. The mate jumped—but too late! A solid wall of water, six feet high, hissed out through the door and whirled him away, crushing him like an egg-shell against the steel sides of the ship!

Marlowe dragged Dusty, still weak but full of fight, out of the room. He ordered the bulkhead sealed to keep the ship afloat. That would restrict the leak to the bow compartment. Dusty grinned at his skipper. The two men shook hands, without speaking. Then they hurried to the deck above. McKeechie lay on a hatch, two of the crew tending him. He saw Marlowe.

"I'm too old for prison, Jim," he whispered, feebly.

As Marlowe patted his shoulder reassuringly, he died. He had redeemed his honor. Marlowe bent over the still form.

"THE crew are abandoning ship, sir!"

Jim Marlowe jumped at the second mate's words. A handful of men were mad with fright. Fearful of their captain's wrath, and with McKeechie dead, they had one boat half swung from the davits. They were clambering in.

Marlowe tore one of them from the rope and hurled him across the deck. Dusty hooked left and right. Another went down.

"Stand back from that boat!"

The men recoiled from the revolver muzzle that backed Marlowe's whiplash command. He tore an axe from its fastenings on the cabin wall. One ripping swing and the bottom was slashed out of the long boat. The skipper dashed across the deck and shattered the other boat. He cut the ropes. The boats disappeared into the jagged, grey seas. Then he faced the crew, raging:

"Now, you rats, you'll work this ship or drown! I brought her out a sound vessel, and I'm going to take her back to port if I have to back her all the way! Go to your stations! Man the pumps! Reinforce that forward bulkhead! Mister Olson—Mister Johnson—drive these dogs to their work!"

"Chief engineer, on the speaking tube," a sailor reported.

Jim breasted the gale to the pilot house and shouted down the tube. What he heard made him chuckle grimly. Good old Mac had made a pump out of the electric generator. It was working! In ten hours they'd be sucked dry. Now let the hurricane roar!

FIVE days later a battered little freighter, with her bow almost under water and her stern so high the propellors were nearly in the air, backed into Valparaiso harbor, the wonder of the seagoing world. The feat of the *Gibraltar* had been broadcast everywhere and a hero's welcome awaited Marlowe, Dusty and old Mac.

After the shouting was over they met the agent of the line. He had startling news for them. Brunch, he told them, had caused the fire on *The Brazil*. The smuggled powder for the revolutionists had been his doing. The company offered its apologies to Marlowe, together with the command of its new liner, *Star of Monterey* and a generous check for saving the *Gibraltar*.

While he was still dizzy with all this a cablegram was thrust into his hand. He read:

"Leaving for Europe to stay indefinitely, so must send congratulations as won't be here when you return. Splendidly done, Jim. Best wishes always, Ruth."

Marlowe reached for a cablegram pad. His pencil traced the words:

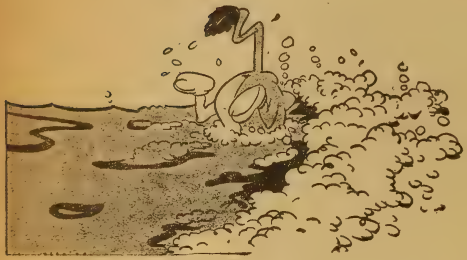
"Miss Ruth Denning, San Francisco, California, U. S. A.

"Returning by plane to command *S. S.* Monterey. You're going to Orient, not Europe——"

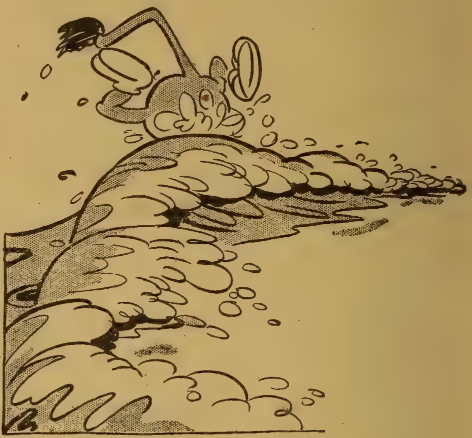
His grin broadened as he went on scribbling his message.

MOVIE CARTOONS—

HOW THEY ARE MADE



The inside story of the world's most popular pictures, told by the creators of MOLLY MOO-COW and "RAINBOW PARADE"



IT would have been a lot better to have been in the room, rather than sitting outside the open door and just hearing snatches of what went on. But, on the other side of the wall, genius was at work. And—it was plain later—genius prefers to work without witnesses.

Here's a fair sample of what came through the door:

A heavy bass voice, "Here's a good chance to work in that idea of mine—butterflies and fairies doing a sort of ballet dance on a sunbeam."

A tough, hoarse Brooklyn accent, "Butterflies 'n' boids—dey don't belong in dis, Mike. Y' know what we need?"

Chorus of voices, "No, what?"

"We gotta have *moimaids!*"

Man with high tenor voice. "Mermaids are okay, only you've got to be careful how you handle them. No sexy stuff."

Bass voice again, "Well how about a ballet of mermaids, then? Felix the Cat can come sinking down in the water——"

Instantly the room inside became a madhouse, with everybody trying to talk at once.

"Have 'em dancing on sea-weed."

"Felix can scare them away for a finish!"

"They can dive back into their homes."

"Have 'em living in a coral cavern."

"Sponges 'd be better."

"I've got some swell ideas for the music. A flute and clarinet duet something like this——"

And above the babel, a clear crisp voice rang out. "That's swell, boys. We'll open with an undersea ballet, then, and Felix comes drifting into the scene and scares them all away. Good stuff. Now, everybody, get going on ideas for that sequence. We'll go over them at ten-thirty tomorrow. Okay?"

Apparently it was thoroughly okay, because a stream of men suddenly shot through the door and disappeared in all directions like a cloud of steam hitting fresh air. In another moment, the air was cleared, the office and anteroom were quiet, and a pleasant-faced man who could have stood a little more hair on the top of his head appeared with outstretched hand.

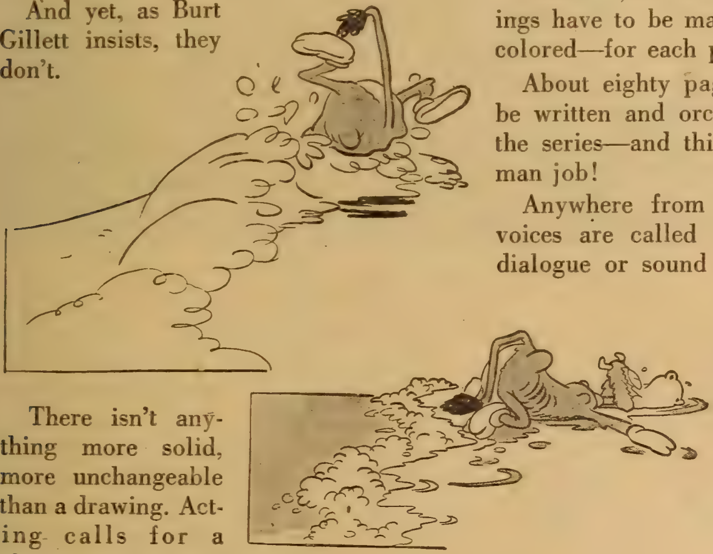
"Hello," he said cheerfully. "I'm Gillett. Sorry I kept you waiting. Come on in."

And, together, we entered the room where fun is turned out by the mile—the office of the studio manager of the Van Beuren Corporation, one of the largest producers of animated cartoons in the world.

"YOU want to know all about how we make our cartoons, I suppose," he smiled. "It's really a lot like any pictures are made—with actors, settings, and directors. Except that here, our actors are never seen. Our actors are the artists."

That sounds all wrong, doesn't it? It's almost sacrilege to say that Mickey Mouse and Molly Moo-Cow and Scrappy and all the other classic cartoon characters don't act.

And yet, as Burt Gillett insists, they don't.



There isn't anything more solid, more unchangeable than a drawing. Acting calls for a change of expressions, and no drawing ever made could change expressions by itself. It's the artist behind the drawing—the animator who sweats over a hot drawing-board all day long—who does the acting for them.

It's the animator who acts—who does all the amusing things that you laugh at. And, to sum it all up, a cartoon character is just as good as—and no better than—the man who draws him.

And it isn't just one burst of inspired drawing that does the trick, either. It is steady, applied effort and patience more than anything else. There's no better way to really be convinced of this than to take a look at some of the statistics on the making of a colored animated cartoon.

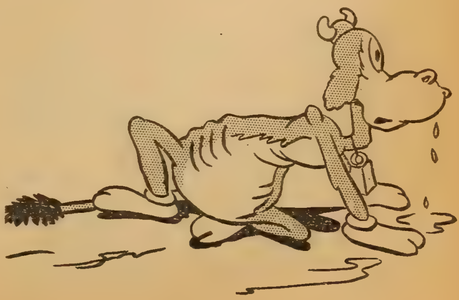
Each of the Van Beuren RAINBOW PARADE series is worked on by no fewer than 100 artists!

Even with 100 artists working on a production, it can't be pushed through in less than three weeks—four weeks is average time. (Yes, we're talking about the colored cartoons that you see run off in your local theatres in six to ten minutes!)

From 12,000 to 15,000 separate drawings have to be made—and traced—and colored—for each production!

About eighty pages of music have to be written and orchestrated for each of the series—and this is generally a one-man job!

Anywhere from five to fifty human voices are called in to do singing or dialogue or sound effects for each production. And it is a rare thing for any of these artists whose voices must synchronize absolutely with the action on the screen, to see the picture in



which their voices are used until it plays in their own neighborhood movie houses! They never see it while they are doing their bits!

So, with the realization that we are going to see something big, let's start from the beginning with Burt Gillett, and see what makes an animated cartoon animated.

THE first thing, naturally, is the idea. The leading characters are fairly well standardized; the problem is to find something amusing for them to do, and create unusual surroundings which will lend color to the proceedings and allow for a certain amount of plot development.

Burt Gillett and his merry men.

This is done by calling the boys together. It's a conference! Come a-running!

Solemnly, eight or ten or a dozen full-grown men sit around a desk and discuss fairies and goblins, buterflies and wolves, moonlight and ghosts. Somebody tells a story he heard last night at the bowling match, and somebody else gets an inspiration. That's the way they work.

Once the original inspiration has been acclaimed by all and sundry, everyone present forgets everything else. The job is to elaborate on that one inspiration—it may be a bit of action, or a situation, or a background, or simply a mood. Whatever it is, once it has been given an okay, every man's job is to contribute to a "scenario" to be built around it.

As they talk, discussing possibilities, some of the men are busy with pencils and papers. These are artists who sketch backgrounds against which the action is to take place so that others can more easily visualize the plot which is being discussed and make more suggestions.

For instance, everyone is talking about a desert island. An artist throws a hurried drawing on Burt Gillett's desk. "How's this?" he wants to know.

Burt nods. Then his eyes light up. He sees the artist has sketched in a big rock, standing alone in a sandy waste.

"Here's something!" he exclaims. "Instead of *one* rock, let's have five—maybe eight! Then Molly and Crusoe (the idea they were after was a cartooned story of Robinson Crusoe with Molly Moo-Cow as Friday) can hide from each other, jump from rock to rock, and finally back into each other!"

After several such sessions, two "books" are made up. One is possibly fifteen pages long. It is typewritten, and it carries the story, a paragraph to a sequence, which they plant to put across in cartoon form.

The other book is longer. With two drawings to a page, it illustrates roughly what the different scenes can look like. New characters, such as dragons, are sketched out. "Gags" are illustrated, too, so that if an undersea police patrol is called for, everyone will be able to see that it will be a whale-shaped fish whose eyes are head-lights, whose tail curls up permitting a couple of undersea "cops" to stand in safety while they streak along through the water, and whose teeth are bared to look like the radiator front of an automobile. (Maybe this description of a submarine "Black Maria" doesn't give you much of a definite picture, but if that is so, you can realize all the more how important these sketch books are to the conference. They'd never get any place without them!)

LET'S follow along with the artists. Down the corridor, and there's a door at the end. Behind it, in an unbelievably small space, work five industrious fellows who do the basic art work for our animated cartoon.

Who are they? They're artists, that's all. Two of them had never done work before in their lives—came fresh from art school to Van Beuren. One used to be a newspaper cartoonist. Another was an architect until they stopped building things; he had to do something, and he could draw, so he applied for a job and got it. The fifth grew up with the animated cartoon business—started as office boy, and look at him today!

Actors and artists combined. They're animators, hard at work.

Between them, these men turn out all the ideas which can be drawn. They analyze and improve upon the rough sketches which have been made in the story conference. Is their villain to be a pirate? Then he will probably be a dog, dressed like a pirate. But what kind of a dog—short and fat, tall and skinny, or just big all over? Will he wear a bandana or a three-cornered hat? Will he have a wooden leg or a crutch?

These are all important things to these five men. They decide on them and one of them draws their finished pirate.

Meanwhile, they are probably at work on other things such as the actual furnishings of the captain's cabin, how many guns the pirate craft will have, or whether the sea will be blue or green.

Finished drawings are made of all the characters. Backgrounds are prepared for every sequence. Work is now really started on the real animation of the story!

HAVING come this far, let's go back a bit and clear up a few points in connection with how these drawings are put together on the screen. The film that is shown in your neighborhood movie is really a series of pictures which are flashed on the screen so fast that you can't see them change from one to the other. It all looks like continuous action.

You actually see twenty-four separate pictures in a second!

Cartoons are put on the screen the same way. They are drawn so that the action of a full second is represented by twenty-four drawings. Each drawing is photographed separately and in sequence, so that they will all combine to give smooth-flowing action when the film is finally assembled.

But *everything* doesn't change from drawing to drawing. The background is usually the same for hundreds of drawings in a row. (Remember, a hundred drawings means only four seconds on the screen.) So the animators don't bother about doing the complete picture—background, moving figures, and all—on each drawing. The backgrounds are done on ordinary paper. But the moving figures are finally drawn on transparent celluloid, placed on the background, and photographed together!

For example, look at the illustrations on page 61. First, there is a rough layout for a scene, done in Gillett's office one day during a conference. Then, below it is the scene as you may have seen it on your local screen—the butterfly has just flown into the scene and landed on the daisy, and a hand is reaching in with a "hot dog" for him. But, in reality, that is three separate drawings—the three at the bottom. There is the background (A), which was drawn on white paper, and which shows just the flowers and the sky. There is the butterfly who moves, and who is therefore drawn on celluloid (B). And the hand with the hot dog, which also moves and is drawn on celluloid (C). Placed one on top of the other, they give the impression of one drawing.

This process eliminates at least 80 per-cent of the apparent drawing seen on the screen. For instance, if the five "frames" following the one illustrated here should show no changes but a movement of the butterfly's hand and mouth, the only art work required would be five new "B" celluloids. The "A" background and the "C" hand and hot dog could be repeated.

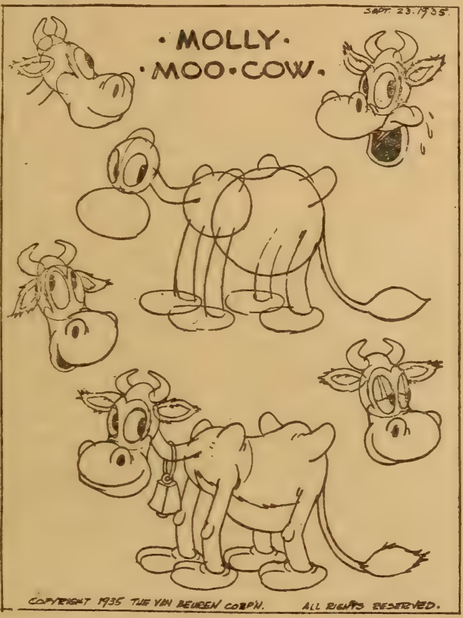
NOW we call in our "actors." In spite of the fact that the five artists we found in the little room at the end of the corridor are what Burt Gillett calls Number One men (because they do preliminary work) *none of their drawings ever get to the screen!*

They draw the layouts for scenes—but their layouts are copied and finished by certain Number Two artists (Number Two in order of working, but not necessarily second in ability). It is their backgrounds which are photographed for the final picture.

Our five Number One artists also create the original ideas for the moving characters. But giving them life—making them move about—having them act—that is the duty of the Number Two men.

Some of these Number Two men do the first animated sketches, showing the moving characters at different stages of the action. Look, for example, on pages 54 and 55, where we have five drawings showing Molly Moo-Cow being washed up on the beach of a desert island (the one with Robinson Crusoe, to be specific), by a friendly wave.

While these are the first steps in bringing Molly to life, they would never do for the finished product. These are pencil sketches, for one thing. For another, they are drawn on paper and not celluloid. And, for a third thing, the action they are supposed to portray should take almost ten seconds—240 drawings, instead of these five.


SEPT. 23. 1935.
·MOLLY·
·MOO·COW·
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Plates similar to this are drawn on all cartoon characters, and given to artists who must follow them minutely.

But these pencil sketches are called "key" sketches. They show the action at various stages. It is up to still other Number Two artists to make drawings to fit in between these five, showing the complete action from start to finish.

NOW we can take a closer look at these Number Two artists. There are about forty of them, with pretty much the same backgrounds that we found for the five in the corner office. Their one common qualification for their jobs is that they could all draw well to start with.

Most of them had been professional artists for at least two years before they entered Burt Gillett's fold. Some had been in other lines, and some came straight from schools. But they were accomplished artists when they applied for their jobs as Number Two men, or they would never have gotten past the front door.

You never can tell what future awaits a Number Two man. He may become a director of animated cartoons some day. Or he might trade his pencil and paper for the flesh and blood as Gregory La Cava did. Those things come in time to those who wait and work hard and deserve the promotions. But, even if they never get any nearer the top, they are all assured of a decent living and more money than most of them have ever made before in their lives.

Each man has his own drawing board, in the center of which is a ground glass plate with a light underneath. This illuminated section is important in getting smooth action. The difference in a character's position between one drawing and the next in sequence is very slight—a fraction of an inch here, a slightly wider angle there. By using the illuminated section of the board and putting the preceding drawing under the one he is working on, the animator can see both drawings at once. So he keeps a smooth flow of action and movement in his work.

The Number Two men, as well as the Number Ones, seldom see their actual drawings on the screen. We have already seen that they do the actual backgrounds, but that is their limit. They draw their moving characters on paper instead of celluloid, and without the brilliant coloring that makes them stand out so dazzingly.

But before we go on with the process,

let's take a look at the long sheets of paper which we haven't seen yet—the exposure sheets clipped onto the Number Two man's drawing board. They are ruled and covered with hieroglyphics that defy imagination. In the left hand columns, there are numbers corresponding with the scene on which the animator is working. Other numbers, we learn, indicate each separate drawing that he will make. But in the open columns, there are words written like this:

CRUSOE
RUNNING

BUCKSHOT
HITS CRUSOE'S
HAT

This is action timed according to the music which will be recorded on the sound track of the film later. It is important that, as the music registers on the sound track, the character should be active accordingly. So, on Scene 12, Drawing 71, our artist will have to make Robinson Crusoe look like he is running. He'll keep that up until he leaps on Drawing 78. Meanwhile, his hat is hit by buckshot in Drawing 74, and from then on Robinson Crusoe's hat sails off, a separate drawing by itself from now on.

And since the exposure sheet is prepared according to music, this brings us naturally to the man who makes up these charts—the musical director.

"DON'T ask me how we find our music men," Mr. Gillett pleaded. "It's just luck. To be a music man for me, a man has to be a composer, an orchestral arranger, a poet, and a swell humorist. That's a lot of things for one man to be."

The musical director, of course, contributes ideas in the conferences in which most of these animated cartoons are born. But, generally, his work starts after the "scenario" has been written, the characters decided upon, and the settings sketched out. For then he has to sit down at his piano and write a complete and original composition which must get under way when the title is flashed on the screen, and can't stop until the picture is ended.

He's like a football player with the ball in his arms—he's got to start fast and keep going.

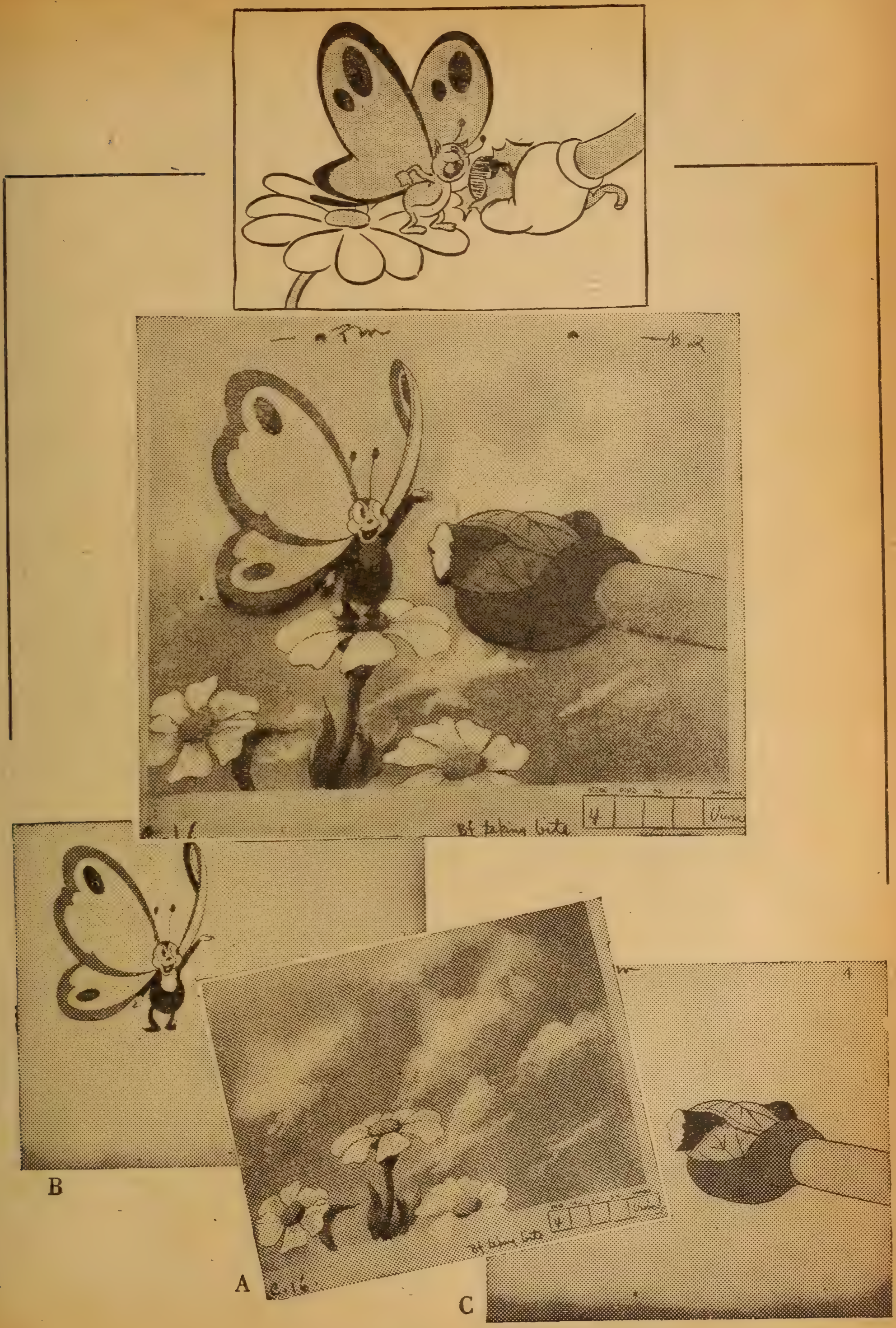
After he has written his music, he makes out a chart on which the measures of his music are timed. Then on music paper, he writes out the detailed action of the cartoon directly above his music, and each sequence is broken up to show just what will be happening with each beat of the music.

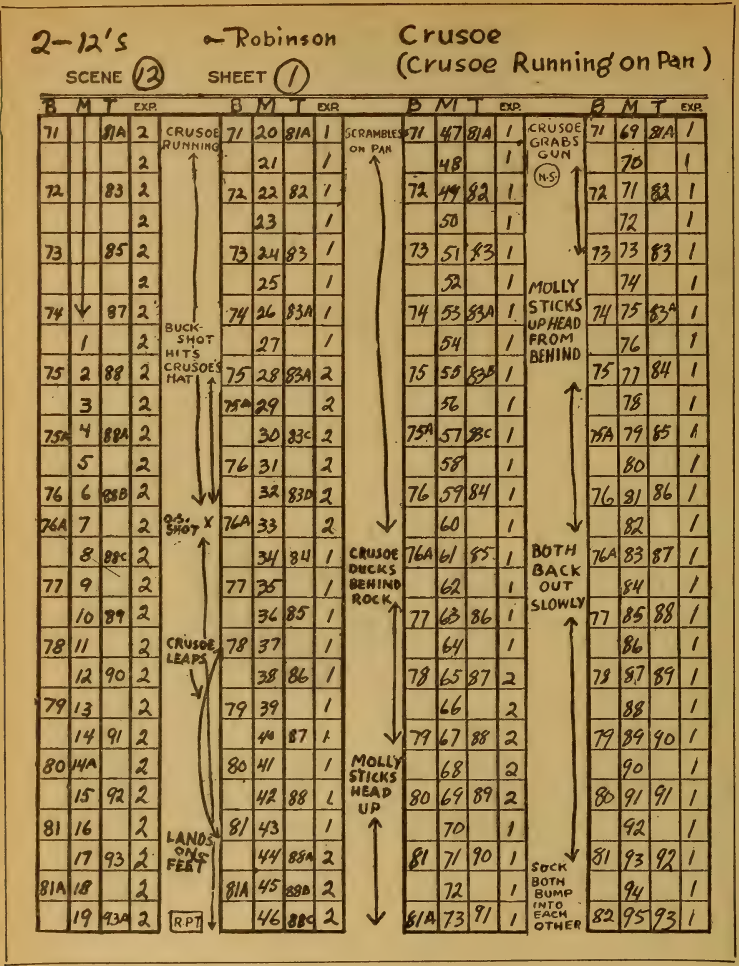
It is from this chart that they finally make up the exposure sheets by which the Number Two artists are guided. The important things—beside getting the characters to appear to sing along with the words which will actually be recorded separately—are to get rhythmical action in time with the music. Wing beats of birds, footsteps of humans and animals, all sorts of motion are carefully noted on the charts and are properly timed by the Number Two artists.

So much for the musical director. We'll be back with him later.

THE Number Two artists have completed all the drawings of the moving characters for a scene. They have finished "acting," but their drawings are still on paper, and are still no good as far as the finished product is concerned. We've still to follow through and see how all the moving units are blended together and put on the solid background.

We come, then, to the Number Three artists. The Number Three artists are a darned good-looking bunch of girls. At first, there might be some question in the uninitiated's mind as to what such a good-looking bunch of girls are doing making pictures in which they won't be seen, themselves. But, in short order, you discover that the girls are all talented in the use of the pen and paint brush.


Bf taking bite
B
A
C



2-12's — Robinson Crusoe
SCENE ⑫ SHEET ① (Crusoe Running on Pan)

B	M	T	EXP.		B	M	T	EXR		B	M	T	EXP.		B	M	T	EXP.
71		81A	2	CRUSOE RUNNING	71	20	81A	1	SCRAMBLES ON PAN	71	47	81A	1	CRUSOE GRABS GUN (N.S.)	71	69	81A	1
			2			21		1			48		1			70		1
72		83	2		72	22	82	1		72	49	82	1		72	71	82	1
			2			23		1			50		1			72		1
73		85	2		73	24	83	1		73	51	83	1		73	73	83	1
			2			25		1			52		1	MOLLY STICKS UP HEAD FROM BEHIND		74		1
74	↓	87	2		74	26	83A	1		74	53	83A	1		74	75	83A	1
	1		2	BUCK-SHOT HITS CRUSOE'S HAT		27		1			54		1			76		1
75	2	88	2		75	28	83A	2		75	55	83B	1		75	77	84	1
	3		2		75A	29		2			56		1			78		1
75A	4	88A	2			30	83C	2		75A	57	83C	1		75A	79	85	1
	5		2		76	31		2			58		1			80		1
76	6	88B	2			32	83D	2		76	59	84	1		76	81	86	1
76A	7		2	O.S. SHOT X	76A	33		2			60		1			82		1
	8	88C	2			34	84	1	CRUSOE DUCKS BEHIND ROCK	76A	61	85	1	BOTH BACK OUT SLOWLY	76A	83	87	1
77	9		2		77	35		1			62		1			84		1
	10	89	2			36	85	1		77	63	86	1		77	85	88	1
78	11		2	CRUSOE LEAPS	78	37		1			64		1			86		1
	12	90	2			38	86	1		78	65	87	2		78	87	89	1
79	13		2		79	39		1			66		2			88		1
	14	91	2			40	87	1		79	67	88	2		79	89	90	1
80	14A		2		80	41		1	MOLLY STICKS HEAD UP		68		2			90		1
	15	92	2			42	88	1		80	69	89	2		80	91	91	1
81	16		2		81	43		1			70		1			92		1
	17	93	2	LANDS ON FEET		44	88A	2		81	71	90	1		81	93	92	1
81A	18		2		81A	45	88B	2			72		1	SOCK BOTH BUMP INTO EACH OTHER		94		1
	19	93A	2	RPT		46	88C	2		81A	73	91	1		82	95	93	1

A typical "Exposure Sheet"

It's the Number Three girl who takes the Number Two animator's drawings and transfers them to transparent celluloid. There are thirty-odd Number Three girls, and they work like mad!

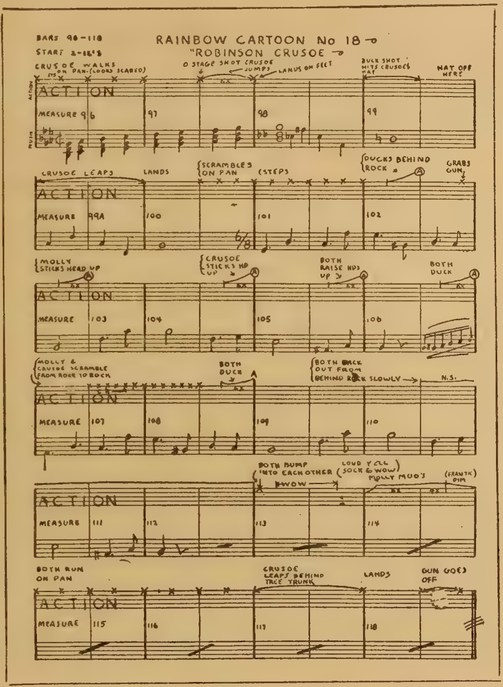
Deftly, some of them clip the original drawings to their drawing boards. Clean, shining squares of celluloid fit over these. Pens are dipped [illegible] black India ink and go skidding swiftly along the lines of the original drawing. Every line is traced faithfully, down to the last scale on a fish or the last leaf on a tree.

Others take these outline drawings and add the colors according to the prepared charts which they have before them. The celluloids are numbered, arranged in order, inspected by the boss Number Three artist—a kindly looking woman called Alice, if you know her well enough. And now, at last, we are approaching something that looks like the finished film.

After the Number Three girls have finished their work, it is possible to take their transparent sheets, put all the moving characters together, superimpose them on the solid background, and see what is going to show on the screen.

ULTIMATELY, after several inspections, the background and celluloids for each scene are turned over to the cameraman. We have all seen typical cameramen at work, either in real life or in pictures. He has a camera which is mounted on a tripod, and he points it at what he wants to shoot, turns a crank and takes a moving picture of it.

But the typical cameraman is nothing like the cameraman who photographs the animated cartoons. His camera is hung from the ceiling of a tiny room, pointed directly at an ordinary looking table. Ringed around the lens are several strong lights shining on the place where the backgrounds and celluloids will be set for shots.


BARS 96-118
START 2-18'8
RAINBOW CARTOON No 18
"ROBINSON CRUSOE
CRUSOE WALKS ON PAN-(LOOKS SCARED)
O STAGE SHOT CRUSOE
JUMPS
LANDS ON FEET
DUCK SHOT HITS CRUSOE'S HAT
HAT OFF HERE
ACTION
MEASURE 96
97
98
99
MUSIC
CRUSOE LEAPS
LANDS
SCRAMBLES ON PAN
(STEPS
DUCKS BEHIND ROCK
GRABS GUN
99A
100
101
102
MOLLY STICKS HEAD UP
CRUSOE STICKS HD UP
BOTH RAISE HDS UP
BOTH DUCK
103
104
105
106
MOLLY & CRUSOE SCRAMBLE FROM ROCK TO ROCK
BOTH DUCK
BOTH BACK OUT FROM BEHIND ROCK SLOWLY
N.S.
107
108
109
110
BOTH BUMP INTO EACH OTHER
LOUD YELL (SOCK & WOW)
WOW
MOLLY MUD'S
(FRANTK) DIM
111
112
113
114
BOTH RUN ON PAN
CRUSOE LEAPS BEHIND TREE TRUNK
LANDS
GUN GOES OFF
115
116
117
118

Don't try to play this on your piano, because it won't work. This is simply the music man's way of tying the music and action together.

Our cameraman has no crank to turn. In its place, he has a button. Instead of taking moving pictures, he takes snapshots on moving picture film, one snap to a frame.

And he photographs on three films instead of one.

Let's watch him at work. In the circle of light on the table, he places the background drawing. There are pegs, fitting into holes in the drawings, so that he gets them in exactly the proper places. Over the background, he places the four celluloids on which moving characters are drawn. Over it all, he sets a black cardboard frame, eliminating the drawings' rough edges. He focuses his camera and presses the button.

We hear three *clicks* in the camera. He explains that each *click* is an exposure of a different film. One film records all the yellow tones in the drawing, another all the reds, and the third catches all the blues. Through combinations of these three colors, any color in the rainbow can be reproduced. And all three of them, combined at maximum strength, produce black by this special Technicolor process.

It is interesting to know that, while ordinary black and white movie film can be developed and printed chemically the same as snapshot film, Technicolor film must finally be printed mechanically as is the cover of MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE—one color at a time. This is all done in the Technicolor Laboratories in Hollywood.

SO now we have a picture, completed as far as camera work is concerned, but still without the musical accompaniment which was written for it. Missing, too, are the sound effects which have been included in the musical score but which are not produceable by musical instruments. Our musical director is back in the picture again!

In the last corner of this amazing floor, we find a large sound-proofed room, equipped with piano and microphones.

There are four men as we look in—one seated at the piano and the other two standing beside the microphones, and our musical director bossing them all.

The men each have their musical scores before them on music racks. They get their tempo from the music man. They know that, on certain beats, they sing or speak or make noises. For the time being, they are merely going to sing.

The pianist starts playing softly. His playing doesn't matter much, because some time soon an orchestra will play the same music, and his playing will be drowned out by many instruments. He is playing simply to keep the singers in tune.

He nods to the singers. They sing together. Then one man stops while the other continues. Suddenly he breaks off with a good round oath.

"Forgot my pause!" he explains apologetically. "Let's start again."

So they start again, while in an adjoining room three men turn dials and check the rhythms to make sure that his voice will coincide with the lips of the impressive King Neptune—the same King Neptune who was created by a Number One artist, brought to life by a Number Two man, traced and colored by a couple of Number Three girls, and photographed last Wednesday by a three-color snapshot camera run by a bored and methodical man named McAvoy.

THAT'S the way colored animated cartoons are made. It's a great life and a dizzy one, especially for those who create. The others who copy and trace don't find things so exciting, but they all have the chance to grow and become one of the creators in time.

The principal thing that everyone concerned must remember is that theirs is a happy business. They are creators of fairylands, and they must always be in the mood to talk in terms of fairies and mermaids. They must smile perpetually, think clean thoughts and live clean lives.

There is no law against their being big and tough in appearance, but their hearts must be soft enough to permit them to speak as they feel. If, to them, a thing is lovely, they must call it lovely and not pretty. It may be that they are even stronger than most men, who are ashamed to utter any more sacharine words than "nice" and "swell."

At any rate, they probably have more fun than the rest of us.

NEXT MONTH . . . .

A real movie Scenario

just as it was used by a
Hollywood director!

DON'T MISS THIS UNUSUAL FEATURE IN

THE MARCH MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE

MA—4

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 29

AH, WILDERNESS

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture with Lionel Barrymore, Wallace Beery, Aline MacMahon, Eric Linden, and Mickey Rooney.

Some pictures can make you relive every moment of them, substituting episodes from your own life for those identical episodes you see on the screen. The only difference will be in the faces of the characters, and you'll enjoy the picture a hundred times more because it has been so true, so honest, so vivid. AH, WILDERNESS is one of that school. It's a page—or several pages—out of small town, middle-class life. It's many stories rolled into one. It is the story of a boy in his teens in love with a girl in his high-school class. It is the story of the boy's father who wants his boy to know and enjoy life. It's the story of the girl, and her family, and a lovable drunk (Wallace Beery, of course!) and his romance with Aline MacMahon.

YOU CAN'T GET AWAY FROM IT—IT'S YOUR STORY, TOO!

SO RED THE ROSE

A Paramount picture with Margaret Sullavan, Randolph Scott, Clarence Muse, and Walter Connolly.

SO RED THE ROSE is more than a picture of a country gone mad—of men rushing off to kill their brothers—and of the women who send them. It is more than a true, vivid, and compelling picture of the South in the days when Lincoln was trying to keep our country together. It *is* the Civil War, Sherman's March to the Sea, death and destruction. While in its calmer moments it is all sweetness and light, with Miss Sullavan holding together her father's (Walter Connolly's) plantation while he is "fightin' the Yankees," it is still a well balanced picture of action and romance—the best film to date about our great Civil War.

GREAT PERFORMANCES ADD TO THE INTEREST AND EXCITEMENT OF THIS CIVIL WAR MOVIE.

I DREAM TOO MUCH

A Radio picture with Lily Pons, Henry Fonda, Eric Blore, Lucien Littlefield, and Mischa Auer.

The cycle of operatic pictures which started almost two years ago couldn't have been complete without one featuring the most brilliant coloratura soprano in the world—Lily Pons. In her film début, Miss Pons shows to fine advantage, her tiny figure and pleasing appearance adding much to the pleasure of her singing. With a routine story, the little lady carries off situation after situation, well earning all the honors that can be heaped upon her.

LILY PONS IS EVEN MORE THAN A GLORIOUS VOICE—SHE IS A PLEASANT AND EFFECTIVE COMEDIENNE.

Continued on page 79

ROAD GANG

"It ain't so bad," they said. "If you stay you go crazy. If you try to escape the dogs rip you open. But compared to Blackfoot, it ain't so bad!"

THERE was the sharp sound of a crunching blow against a human skull. Jim Larrabie and Bob Gordon failed to see exactly what happened in the darkness of the jail corridor.

The old jailer had been just ahead of them, unlocking the door of the "tank." He emitted a slow groan and crumpled. Before his body touched the floor, a hand from inside the tank had snatched the old man's gun from its holster.

A huge gorilla of a man swung the gun on Jim and Bob.

"Outside, or I'll let you have it!" ordered the gorilla.

Jim and Bob backed against the wall.

"If you want to get out, beat it," said Jim. "But we're not going to get into any jam."

"Shut up!" snarled the gorilla. "Maybe I croaked that guy!"

In less than a minute the three men were outside. The gorilla swung the gun. Jim and Bob climbed into the seat of their roadster. The gorilla crouched in the rumble seat.

"Now drive for the state border!" The gun was jammed in Jim Larrabie's back. Jim, a young newspaperman, had no choice.

Jim and Bob knew they were getting into a sweet jam. Jim was sure the old jailer had died under the blow. Now they were becoming fugitives along with the killer in the rumble seat.

THEY had been arrested less than an hour before by a motorcycle policeman. The cop had declared he had orders from the town they had just left. Though they knew it was a frameup, the policeman said Jim and Bob were wanted for grand larceny.

Jim Larrabie had known the exact reason for that charge. In spite of his years, he was fully aware of the political chicanery practiced in this part of the South. He knew the charge came from a political boss, J. W. Metcalfe. It was intended to prevent Jim reaching a job on the Chicago *Sun* which he had secured through an article exposing the crookedness of this same Boss Metcalfe.

Metcalfe had tried to bribe him, of course. But, backed up by his sweetheart, Barbara Winston, the youthful newspaperman had started for Chicago to take the job with the *Sun*. His pal, Bob Gordon, accompanied him.

So, when the motorcycle man overtook them on the road, Jim and Bob knew exactly why they were being taken to the small town jail. They had gone along willingly.

The murder of the kindly old jailer had been an unforeseen calamity. Up to that fatal moment, the boys had been innocent victims. Now they were fugitives from the law, playing right into Metcalfe's hands! But with the killer in the rumble seat and the gun in his back, Jim could only hold the small car on the road and give it all it would take.

The roadster took a curve on two wheels. Jim was wondering if he could possibly wreck the car and escape. The light of a motorcycle jumped into view.

"I'll take care of that guy!" yelled the gorilla.

The gorilla's gun spat fire. The motorcycle skidded and the policeman turned over in the ditch. The cop was only bruised. He got up and ran for the nearest farmhouse.

Three miles farther down the road, Jim Larrabie saw the barricade. Grim-faced men surrounded the obstruction. The gorilla jammed the gun into Jim's neck.

Y. PRISON FARM

The boys were chained by their necks with other prisoners inside a state penitentiary truck.

"Slow up, and you're through!" he yelled.

The roadster hit the barricade. It plowed through. Guns cracked. Cars rolled into the highway. Slugs hissed and whined off the pavement.

The gorilla threw up his hands and pitched out. A posse bullet had passed through his throat.

With screaming brakes, Jim halted the roadster. A grim-faced giant of a farmer was the first to confront him.

"This is all a mistake—we'll explain as——"

Jim got no further. The giant farmer knocked him down. The posse of enraged farmers surrounded them. In their minds there was only one answer.

Jim and Bob must be Chicago stick-up men! They had been caught, jailed, and had escaped by killing their jailer. Hanging was too good for them!

The young partners were herded quickly to a jail. They were facing a charge of murder.

J. W. METCALFE chuckled over the report of this arrest. He called George Winston, the stepfather of Jim's sweetheart. They laughed together over the outcome of their too well-planned coup.

"I didn't frame the murder," said Metcalfe. "That was too perfect."

Barbara read the accounts of the episode in the evening paper. She sought her stepfather's help in freeing Jim, not knowing that he was in with Metcalfe on the nefarious plan. Her stepfather promised to get Dudley, the country's most famous criminal lawyer, to handle the cases of Jim and Bob. He pretended to be very optimistic about the boys' futures.

But Dudley shook his head seriously when, some days later, he confronted Jim and Bob in their cell.

"Plead guilty to jail-breaking and I can get you off with six months or a suspended sentence," was his advice. "If you don't do that, it is ten to one you'll be convicted of murder. And murder's a serious crime, boys."

Because Barbara had assured Jim that Dudley could be trusted, the youths put their fate in his hands. They accepted his advice, but his promise seemed to be worthless. A stern old Southern judge heard their plea of guilty.

"James Larrabie and Robert Gordon," he said, "I hereby sentence you to five years at hard labor in the state penitentiary!"

Shortly after this sentence, Attorney Dudley met George Winston outside the court.

"Well," said Winston, "that takes care of our young friends for the next five years."

"Yes," smiled Attorney Dudley, "but in that prison, five years might as well be life."

Bewildered Barbara Winston could hardly understand what had happened. And neither could Jim Larrabie nor Bob Gordon.

For within a few hours, the boys were chained by their necks with other prisoners inside a state penitentiary truck, rattling down a road destined to lead them to unimagined horrors.

WITHIN the wire network of the truck, the prisoners were like chained animals. Older convicts cursed. The driver and guards rolled fast. Mounted men followed the truck as it rolled through the gates.

A prison doctor gave the new arrivals very little attention. Warden Parmenter looked them over with a sneer. The warden made a speech. He ended it with:

"You're here to be made good citizens out of, and if you won't change voluntarily into honest folks, I just natchally gotta force ya to it."

Still dazed by the swiftness of their conviction, Jim and Bob found themselves in the rough prison clothes. The mess of black bread and other indefinable food allotted to them as their suppers was too much for them.

That night, the youths were chained in their bunkhouse. Guards with shotguns watched them closely. Jim and Bob and the other men were laid out like animals, one man's head touching the next man's feet.

As Jim and Bob were ordered to their places, the warden and a guard rousted

A fictionization of the Warner Bros. picture of the same title.

THE CAST

DONALD WOODS	James Larrabie
Carlyle Moore, Jr.	Bob Gordon
Kay Linaker	Barbara Winston
Joe King	George Winston
Henry O'Neill	Metcalfe
Addison Richards	Warden Parmenter

Directed by
Louis King

Story by
Abem Finkel and
Harold Buckley

Screenplay by
Dalton Trumbo.

an older convict from his bunk. In the warden's hand, a whip cracked with a vicious snap!

"Don't, boss! Don't do that!" pleaded the convict.

The whip cracked across the convict's shoulders as the two men forced him outside into the darkness. It was a long time before his screams faded away, but they rang in blood-curdling echoes through Jim's mind for the rest of the night.

"Where are they taking him?" whispered Jim to the nearest prisoner as a guard passed out of hearing.

"Blackfoot," said the prisoner. "He tried to get away."

"What's Blackfoot?" said Jim.

"The mines," whispered the prisoner. "It's so bad any of us would rather be shot than go there. When you're shot, you die quick. But when you're in Blackfoot, it takes a long time!"

"It couldn't be worse than this," said Jim.

"This ain't so bad," said the prisoner. "You get twenty lashes every once in a while, and filthy grub, and a few nights on the barrel. If you stay you go crazy in a year or two. If you try to escape the dogs rip you open. But compared to Blackfoot—it ain't so bad!"

Their conversation was broken by the sound of a blow. A whip-lash was cutting into a man's bared back. The man screamed and groaned. Somebody else was getting it!

Around Jim and Bob, the convicts raised their heads that were like death masks. Some buried their faces in the filthy clothes. One boy counted the strokes, his mournful voice rising in pitch and tension with every lash.

Then outside somewhere a song began. Darky prisoners were singing. Jim managed to peer through the window. He saw the shadow of a limp man hanging by his wrists to a whipping post. The convict could no longer feel the blows.

"Funny," muttered Jim, "the darkies can always find something to sing about."

DAYS wore on—killing days—days marked by beatings, inhuman treatment, revolting food. The end of the first week found the two boys wondering if either of them would be alive five years later.

Jim was taking it easier than Bob Gordon. Less used to the rigors and hardships of every-day life, it is no wonder that Bob could barely move to avoid the curling, snapping black whip of their gang foreman.

Jim was taking it easier than Bob Gordon.

Working in the open quarry, the hot morning sun blistering his back, his hands a mass of red flesh, Bob was finally unable to lift his pick.

Noon came, and the convicts were allowed to quit their work and partake of filthy black sandwiches. Jim managed to force his down. Bob Gordon rolled on his face, too weak to eat. An old convict snatched his sandwich and bolted it down greedily.

Close by, a guard was eating his lunch. He threw scraps of cake to several slaver-mouthed bloodhounds who always accompanied gangs working on roads or quarries off the prison limits. He carelessly rolled up the cake's wrapping paper and tossed it away. With infinite caution, Jim got that bit of paper!

"What's the idea, kid?" questioned another prisoner softly. Jim's stealthy efforts had caught his eye.

"I'm going to write this rotten camp up and spread it over the front page of a certain newspaper," Jim replied tensely.

Bob Gordon raised his head. His lips were black. He could neither eat nor drink.

"When I get—used to this—I'll help to——" he gasped.

Sam Dawson, one of the guards, walked past.

"Time's up!" he snapped. "Get back on the job!"

Bob Gordon tried to get up. He fell back. The guard's brutal boot cracked into his ribs.

Jim Larrabie uttered no word. His lean body whipped forward. He smashed the guard solidly under the chin. Sam Dawson fell. He was spitting out broken teeth.

"Grab 'im!" yelled another guard.

The butt of a gun rapped over Jim's skull. As he fell, the old convict nearby muttered.

"An' that means the barrel for him!"

THE old convict had been right. It *had* meant the barrel for Jim Larrabie.

Bob Gordon clung to the bars of a bunkhouse window. His eyes were dead with pain. He was looking into the middle of the prison yard.

Standing on his tiptoes on a barrel was Jim. His wrists were tied to a scaffolding overhead. He had been there for hours.

Across the yard, darky convicts were singing, "Swing low, sweet Chariot!"

Jim's teeth tore his lips. The blood trickled off his chin. He couldn't stand forever on his toes. Yet, if he let his heels touch the top of the barrel, all his weight hung on his wrists, and searing fire shot through his shoulders.

Swing low, sweet Chariot. . . . .

Jim threw back his head. In his misery and bitter anger, he twisted his head until he saw nothing but the sky. His whole body writhed with pain. Soon he was conscious that his contorting was in rhythm with the darkies' mournful melody.

He began screaming the song, "Swing low, sweet Chariot."

Then his whole body relaxed. He went limp. The pain had rendered him unconscious.

It was only a few days later when Barbara Winston visited Jim Larrabie in the prison camp. Jim was overjoyed to see the girl. But the news she brought was not so good.

"They made my stepfather state prison director," said Barbara. "I've told him what things are like for you, here, but he won't do anything. Metcalfe is running everything, so I've left home!"

"There's a way out," Jim whispered. "I'm slipping you a piece of paper, Get it to the Chicago *Sun.* It means everything!"

But as Barbara attempted to leave the prison five minutes later, she was ushered into Warden Parmenter's office. The warden coolly seized her purse and found the tiny pellet of paper. He read aloud part of what Jim Larrabie had written, scratching his letters into the smooth paper with a pin point.

"H'm'm! 'Gorilla guards.' 'A moronic warden.' 'Nights of incredible torture on what they call the barrel.' 'The lash screams through the prison every night—the ultimate triumph of a sadistic savage.' "

The names of James Larrabie and Robert Gordon were signed to the paper.

The gentle Barbara Winston pleaded for possession of the message. Then she

Bob could barely move to avoid the snapping black whip of their gang foreman.

accused the warden of being guilty of all Jim's charges. He ordered her firmly from his office.

"I wouldn't bother to come down here any more," he said. "There will be no private messenger systems operating out of any jail I run! G'bye."

In another few minutes, Warden Parmenter had George Winston on the telephone. He described the whole episode in detail to the new state prison director. Then, acting on Winston's order, he had Jim and Bob brought to his office.

Concluding a long speech, the warden said, "And to-morrow you sort of graduate—you join all the other smart boys in Blackfoot!"

DEEP in the torturing Blackfoot mine one vacant-faced old man was called the "Chuckler." He always chuckled. His mind was gone. He had been there eleven years.

Another old convict helped Jim and Bob all he could to accustom them to their inhuman labor. For twelve solid hours a day, they mined coal in the most miserable conditions. Every hour, tons of coal were pushed out to the elevators by hand.

Jim and Bob lay on their back, undercutting coal with their picks. The Chuckler came along. A guard's sharp whistle ordered the men to push out a loaded car.

The Chuckler made a sudden spring at the nearest guard. His pick swung high. The guard screamed. He evaded the descending pick by a few inches. With a quick turn of his wrist, the Chuckler drove the metal point into his own foot!

Jim and Bob stared aghast at the sight. A guard yelled:

"Throw him on top of the load!"

The crazed Chuckler, with his limp, bleeding foot, was tossed onto the carload of coal.

"So that's one way to get out of here," muttered Jim.

"No," stated the old convict close behind them. "Either you finish your sentence or you end up at the undertaker's."

Between Jim, Bob and the old convict sprang up an understanding. In a small way, that comradeship helped them bear their daily horrors. Jim and Bob saw men brutally beaten. They saw them worked like mules, even harder than the mules.

So it came to the day when their comradeship had ripened into a conspiracy to escape.

Deep in one section, Jim, Bob, the old convict and the Chuckler—back at work despite his horribly mangled foot—were working furiously. They were making sure their car would be ready to move out on time.

"There go the whistles," said Jim. "Now, get set!"

The four men strained to get their car moving. The car rocked down the tracks. From several other cuts came other cars. About fifteen were lined up waiting for the elevators.

The cars were being coupled. Mules were being hitched. Guards with shotguns started herding the convicts toward the elevator shaft.

Jim whispered through tight lips, "Get ready!"

The word passed along all the line of convicts. As the mules started to strain on the loads, Jim whirled.

"I'll teach you to squeal, you dirty rat!" he yelled.

His fist collided with Bob Gordon's jaw. Bob flailed into action. The guards were amazed for a moment. Then the nearest of them sprang to separate the two. Each of the boys turned on the guards.

Other guards attempted to interfere, but abruptly, the whole line of guards found itself engaged with the boiling line of convicts! It was a riot!

A guard with a machine gun raised it to shoot. He dropped it, afraid of hitting other guards. A shotgun erupted. Two men fell.

Though unarmed, the rioters were desperate men. They realized that worse than death awaited failure of their revolt. They rolled in a wave over the guards, tying and gagging each guard as he fell.

AS the revolt was breaking out in the Blackfoot Mine, a small party arrived at the office of Mine Warden Grayson. In this party were Barbara Winston, Secretary Marsden, from the governor's office; Harry Shields, editor of the Chicago *Sun*; the political boss, Metcalfe; and George Winston, state prison director.

Their sudden arrival had been due to Barbara's determination to get action. She had gone to Shields, of the Chicago *Sun*, with Jim's story—not the one he had written, but what she knew of the cruel plot.

Shields, by his influence, had got Barbara to the governor's secretary. And ultimately she had prevailed upon him to form this commission to investigate her claims of injustice and inhumanity.

Warden Grayson smiled at his visitors.

"The men will be up in a few minutes," he said. "I want you to meet them, eat their food, visit their bunkhouses. You won't find a more contented bunch of men in the state. Isn't that right, Mr. Metcalfe?"

Metcalfe declared this was true, and

"There's a way out," Jim whispered. "Get this paper to the Chicago 'Sun.' It means everything."

oath ended in a spattering cough as a gray cloud enveloped him. The ventilators were shooting the gas out of the mine!

"Reverse the ventilators!" yelled Warden Grayson.

A nearby guard protested. "The bad air will blow up the mine!"

"Who cares?" yelled Grayson. "They asked for it!"

WITH the ventilators reversed, more gas bombs whistled and hissed into what might soon become a tomb. Down below, the trapped miners stared at the puffs of another, more deadly gas—at the damp which might cause an explosion any moment.

The eyes of the bound guards betrayed their hopeless terror. From their muffled mouths came queer little sounds of pleading like animals in pain. The damp billowed over them.

The convicts poured in a panic into a side passage. The Chuckler was coughing horribly, but an insane light came into his eyes. He did not flee with the others. Instead, he fastened his fingers on the throat of one of the guards.

Jim Larrabie was caught in the rush

to escape. He fought back against the stream of struggling men.

"We can't leave the guards to die like that!" he pleaded.

But he received no help just then. Jim got back to the guards just as the Chuckler's death grip closed on a throat. Jim hurled the murder-mad convict aside. He ran, tearing the gags from the mouths of the guards.

"Now how do you like your swell warden?" he yelled at his prisoners. "You're just like us; now—dogs—rats—gas fodder and gun fodder! Stay here and die, or come with us and fight!"

With gulped oaths the guards joined the miners. Like an army of ghosts they fled before the gas billows to the last chamber.

At the order of the old convict, an effort was made to block out the gas. The miners tore off their clothing, piled up coal and rocks. But they knew as they labored frantically that their efforts would be useless. Every man felt Death clutching at his throat!

THE Chicago *Sun* was stopping its presses to make room for the damning story. Over the phone, Shields told how Warden Grayson was choking his own guards to death rather than arbitrate with the trapped convicts.

Barbara Winston was back in the warden's office. There was a queer light in her eyes. She suddenly began to ransack the warden's desk, his letter files, his ledgers—every conceivable spot where confidential information, not for the public's attention, might be hidden.

As this was happening, Jim Larrabie clipped a guard on the chin, a thousand feet below the ground.

"Give me the keys to the explosives room!" Jim demanded.

"I'll see you in Hell first!" the guard rapped out. He plunged at the youth.

Another guard came to Jim's assistance. Together, they overpowered the first guard. Jim looked slowly at his fellow convicts. One way the gas would get them. This other way—well, perhaps it was a chance!

"Wrap your clothes around your faces," ordered Jim. "If we can hold out for five minutes, we'll blow these workings to Kingdom Come!"

The old convict and one guard were with Jim as he broke out the dynamite. The others fled into side tunnels.

"This is a thin wall, here. Maybe we can break through the old mine on the other side to the outside," explained the old convict. "If we can't, we're done for anyway."

Jim connected the explosive in a natural pocket in the rocky wall. He stood over the plunger until his fellow miners were clear. Then he pushed down with all his might!

The floor of the mine shaft heaved. Walls rocked and tumbled.

Warden Grayson, Bull Hennessy, Metcalfe and Winston, standing near the main shaft, heard the dull rumble of the blast as it boomed up the shaft.

"She's gone up!" shouted Bull. "The damp exploded!"

"That's no damp—that's blasting!" yelled the warden. "Grab your masks and the machine guns! We're going down!"

The blast had broken through an old mine which led to daylight. As Bull Hennessy led machine gunners into the main shaft, the convicts were pouring through the breach into the other mine!

Grayson issued quick orders. "They may be breaking through the old workings. If they are, keep drivin' 'em, Bull! We'll meet 'em outside with dogs and guns! We'll mow 'em down!"

Storming into his office, the furious warden called for guns and dogs to trap the convicts when they came out. Shields turned to report this development to his paper, but Grayson pulled a gun on him and ordered him not to use the telephone again.

"Grayson," Marsden objected, "you've

deliberately and indecently flouted all authority tonight. I'm going to have you thrown out if it's my last official act!"

"It will be, Marsden," Boss Metcalfe put in. "After to-night you and the governor are both washed up. A state full of murder-mad convicts won't help you any. I'll see to it that Grayson is cleared and you're blamed!"

Then, as Shields bolted for the door, Grayson's angry voice thundered out. "I forbid anyone to leave this room!"

DESPITE the best efforts of Jim Larrabie and the old convict, the miners were bent on rushing into daylight to their death. Jim tried to show them that such rashness would bring them face to face with the gunmen stationed outside by Warden Grayson.

His reasoning was right. On the hillside below the mine, scores of armed horsemen with dogs were awaiting the escaping men. Their machine gun bullets were ready to rake the slope.

But fear of a pursuing party, such as the one being led by Bull Hennessy, forced him to execute a strategic movement. From a concealed exit, he led his revolting convicts silently straight toward the office of Warden Grayson! This was the last place their pursuers would be seeking them.

Whispers passed along—"Surround the warden's office—surround the warden's office."

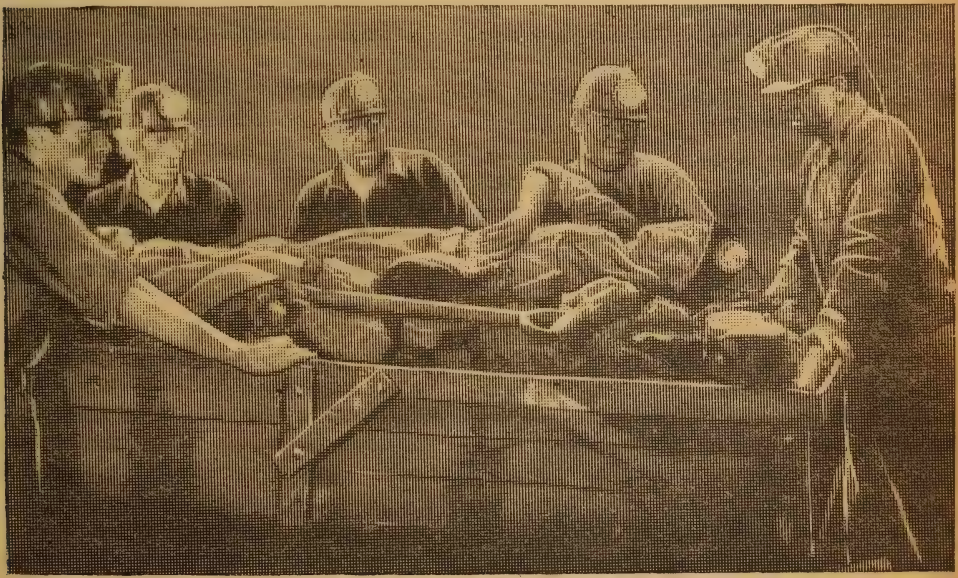
Jim was leading the way to Warden Grayson's door!

Inside this office Warden Grayson held Shields, Marsden and Barbara at bay with a gun in his hand. Metcalfe and Winston looked on.

"I have to be hard," Grayson was asserting. "In ten years I haven't had a man in that mine I couldn't handle barefisted."

The door snapped open. Jim Larrabie stood there. His face was coalgrimed and bloodstained. His eyes were cold and hard. Grayson whirled, heaved to his feet. He fired as he rose.

The slug spun Jim around, halted him for the fraction of a second. But Grayson did not shoot again. Jim's iron fist knocked him off his feet. And, in the



The crazed Chuckler, with his limp and bleeding foot, was tossed onto the carload.

twinkling of a second, Jim held the gun of the warden who said he could whip any of his men bare-fisted!

"Jim! Oh, Jim!" cried Barbara Winston.

"Barbara!" Jim gasped. Her presence, as well as that of the others in the room, was a shock to Jim.

"Now, what's all this?"

Shields stepped forward. "I'm Shields of the Chicago *Sun*," he said. "This is Mr. Marsden from the governor's office."

Jim jumped quickly to one side. He whirled George Winston nearly off his feet.

"All right!" snapped Jim. "I know the rest! You, Grayson, Winston and Metcalfe! I've got the boys and ten of the guards outside! It's a showdown!"

HE turned to Shields and Marsden.

"Forget about conditions here," he said. "You can get this bunch for graft. I've been watching! I know who sells all the rotten grub to these men! I know who contracts for every cheap blanket! And I know who gets the cut on every ton of coal!"

Metcalfe blustered, "You'll have to prove that!"

Jim whipped over to Warden Grayson's desk. Barbara caught his arm.

"That won't be necessary, honey," she said. "I've already taken care of that."

From her brief-case, Barbara drew a sheaf of letters. Jim glanced at them, then began reading them aloud.

"Grayson to Metcalfe—tonnage report! Grayson to Central Supply—that's owned by a Metcalfe dummy corporation. Metcalfe to Grayson—Enclosed find check! Winston to Grayson—Hereafter purchase all machinery from Babtile & Company, another Metcalfe outfit!"

Jim faced the rest of the room.

"What's the use? If I ever get out, I'll blow this state wide open!"

Marsden interrupted.

"There won't be any trouble getting out of here, Larrabie," he said, indicating the men outside, "unless something bad happens now."

"That'll be easy," Jim assured him. "We made our demands. Now all we want is a complaint board. We want time off sentences for better tonnage."

"That's reasonable," assented Marsden.

"And what about them?" Jim said grimly, indicating Grayson, Metcalfe and Winston.

"I fear the attorney general will find a place for them for a long time to come," stated Marsden.

Winston cringed. He held out an appealing hand to Jim Larrabie.

"But, Jim, my boy, you couldn't——"

Jim flashed around to Barbara, ignoring her now broken stepfather.

"Your choice of me is still the same?" he said.

"Still the same," Barbara said huskily.

Jim walked to the door. "Boys," he said simply, "go back to your bunks and wait there. Everything's going to be all right!"

HARRY SHIELDS was on the telephone.

"Hello, rewrite," he was saying. "All set! The Blackfoot riot collapsed tonight, carrying the whole Metcalfe machine with it."

Cheers roared from both guards and convicts outside, interrupting his dictation. Shields looked up to see Jim and Barbara framed together in the doorway.

"Oh, yes," he said into the phone, "before I forget. Tell Blaine to fix up an office next to mine for a new man. Name is James Larrabie. He's a little hotheaded, but I think he'll turn out all right."

He smiled at the pair in the door.

"Now go on with the story," he said. "Prison stares George Winston and J. W. Metcalfe straight in the face——"

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 65

THE STORY OF LOUIS PASTEUR

A Warner Brothers picture with Paul Muni, Josephine Hutchinson, Donald Woods, Porter Hall, and Halliwell Hobbes.

Make no mistake about it, this is real, honest to goodness melodrama. For our hero, we have a French scientist. For our villains, we have all the diseases imaginable, plus the stupidity of mankind. This is the real life story of Louis Pasteur, the man who is responsible, more than any other individual, for the healthy state of humanity, today. It's a thrilling tale, with suspense enough for a dozen pictures, and action that will make you want to cheer. Don't miss it!

PAUL MUNI'S BACK AGAIN, WITH A HISTORIC ROLE AND A GREAT PICTURE!

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

A Columbia picture with Peter Lorre, Edward Arnold, Marian Marsh, Robert Allen, and Douglas Dumbrille.

We all know what happens to a man who kills another man and gets caught; he goes to jail, and possibly he is executed for his crime. But what about the murderer who *isn't* caught? There is where Columbia Pictures have made themselves a great picture. Moving slowly, but with painstaking accuracy, the film traces the process whereby a sensitive murderer—who is not a habitual criminal—is almost driven mad by his conscience. The script was well adapted from the famous Russian novel to give it greater entertainment values.

A HEAVY BUT GRIPPING MELODRAMA OF CRIME, PERFECTLY ACTED!

SEVEN KEYS TO BALDPATE

A Radio picture with Gene Raymond, Eric Blore, Grant Mitchell, Erin O'Brien-Moore, and Moroni Olsen.

George M. Cohan made this comedy famous on Broadway years ago. Rewritten in the modern tempo, it has all the speed and dynamic power of an express train, and the side-splitting comedy is still with it in full force. Gene Raymond plays an author who goes to Baldpate Inn for peace and quiet in which he can write his new book. But instead of a sleepy country hotel, he finds a place overrun with crooks and gangsters of all description. A haul of $200,000 passes from hand to hand like a basket-ball, and the film winds up with a whirlwind finish.

IT'S THE TEMPO THAT PUTS THIS ULTRA-FUNNY COMEDY OUT IN FRONT!

Continued on page 93

They sneered when she said she'd be

THE GIRL WHO CAME BACK

But she proved her desire to go straight was more dangerous to them than any cop's gun!

BURKE, from headquarters, was watching the house out front. The blonde at the telephone had spotted him there every time she went near a window. Cops. Spies. It went on like that all the time. Gilda was sick of it.

"Hello?" she said crisply, as the bell that had sumoned her stopped its waspish buzzing.

"Aunty," that old, white-haired crook with the face of an angel who acted as Gilda's certificate of respectability, leaned forward to watch her charge with shrewd eyes. She knew it was Brewster's place calling, even before the girl spoke again.

"Yes, Jason. What's the bad news? . . . Uhuh. . . . All right, send Charlie for me. Back alley. Burke is still watching out front." She cradled the receiver slowly, and turned to the old lady. "Brewster wants to see me."

"Are you going to tell him?" Aunty rasped, her face twitching with tell-tale fear.

"Just as well now as later."

Between them, like some actual presence, lurked the memory of a grim decision made earlier that day. You never can kiss the racket goodby, gangdom said. But Gilda Gillespie was kissing it goodby. Quitting it cold, before it stifled her.

"Aren't you afraid he'll——"

"Brewster? Maybe. But I've *got* to break!" All the torture and distaste of being a hunted thing showed in her lovely eyes. "We'll decamp before they can pull any rough stuff. You pack while I'm gone. And this time, don't take anything that doesn't belong to us."

BREWSTER'S place was a studio. And Hal Brewster was an artist. His murders were the works of a master. His jewel thefts thrilled connoisseurs. But counterfeiting was his specialty. Currency he had saved the mint the trouble of engraving was passed in good faith daily under the windows of every bank in town.

He smiled thinly, coldly, across the

A fictionization of the Chesterfield Picture of the same title.

Produced by George R. Batcheller

Directed by Charles Lamont

Story and screenplay by
Ewart Adamson

THE CAST

SIDNEY BLACKMER	William Rhodes
SHIRLEY GREY	Gilda
Noel Madison	Brewster
Frank LaRue	Burke
Mathew Betz	"Smoky"
Don Brodie	Jason

Gilda straightened suddenly. "Give me three days, you lug, and I'll have those stones!"

little space that separated him from Gilda Gillespie.

"Here's Harry, the best man on combination locks in the country," the gang chief indicated lazily, and the girl's gray glance found one of the half-dozen thugs grouped about them in the shadows. "The trouble is, honey, we can't find the safe for him to open."

Gilda waited. She knew the story that was coming. Hal Brewster's newest coup. Another link in the chain that had bound her to the underworld. Only—she was breaking that chain tonight. And she was telling Brewster so.

"A collection of jewels that would make your mouth water," the boss drawled. "Chester Madison's famous ice. Somewhere in his mansion, in a safe. But we can't find it. The safe is in the library, yet it isn't. Sounds silly, doesn't it?"

"Did you ever try saying *'Hey, Presto!'* or *'Open Sesame!'?"*

"We've tried everything, Gilda. Been over every inch with a fine-tooth comb. So—what do you figure?"

Gilda steeled herself, meeting his eyes. *You never can quit the racket.* They put you away on ice, if you quit. A quitter might be a squealer, and squealers were too dangerous.

"Sorry to tell you, Brewster, but nothing doing."

"Cold feet?" he clipped.

"No. I just came to tell you. From now on, I'm going to be a good little girl."

She could feel the men behind her move forward furtively. "Not a good little stool pigeon, of course?" Brewster grated. "Smoky's" hand was on his hip. Jason's was stealing toward a shoulder holster.

"Don't be a fool, Hal. You know I'll be close as a clam."

"Unless, maybe, some one scared you."

Gilda met that killer leer with a shrug of cool indifference. Inside, her heart was racing, pounding. Death was crowding behind her. She knew these men.

"I don't scare, Brewster. You know that."

His head jerked forward.

"Don't scare? You're scared now. Scared of Burke."

"That—that's a lie!"

"You've cracked, Gilda. You're going yellow. It's nerves. You're so far gone you're even afraid of this Madison job."

Gilda straightened suddenly.

"Yes? Give me three days, you lug, and I'll have those stones. I'll do it myself, in my own way! And you nit-wits can keep clear!"

The door slammed behind her, an angry crash. Listening, Hal Brewster chuckled.

"And that, my boys, is doing it the easy way!"

HE chuckled again, triumphantly, when the next evening's extras hit the street. The trick had worked. Gilda had done it.

MADISON MANSION SCENE OF DARING ROBBERY

False Arrest Of Butler Aids In Clever Crime

The famous Chester Madison jewels are missing tonight, after an unidentified girl and two pretended police officers tricked Mr. Madison into believing that his butler was a thief sought on international charges.

When Madison opened a hidden wall safe in compliance with the request of the supposed police, a gun was thrust into his ribs and . . .

There was plenty about the story to make Hal Brewster laugh. Plenty. Gilda was smart when you kept her in line. He went on reading and grunting with delight.

It was the next morning's headlines that weren't so funny.

STOLEN JEWELS RETURNED BY WOMAN CROOK

An express package delivered late last night at the Chester Madison mansion proved to contain jewels snatched from the Madison safe hours before. Detective T. E. Burke, on duty at the mansion, was unable to discover who had sent the parcel, but expressed belief that he knew the woman involved.

"Only one person could have pulled this job," he said to reporters. "I'll find her if . . ."

Brewster didn't laugh over that one.

The jewels returned! A fortune lost! His eyes narrowed as he passed over the folded sheet for Smoky to read.

"Double-crossed!" the gun man grated. "We got to get to her quick!"

Brewster grinned bleakly.

"Yeah? Do you think she left an address? But I'll catch up with her. And when I do——"

CALIFORNIA. A bungalow at the Hollywood Court, with Aunty to take care of it. A sun in the sky. Fresh air to breathe. And no Burkes, watching her doorstep like cats waiting to pounce.

Gilda was loving it. The life behind her—mobmen and dark alleys and lies and violence—seemed like a black dream. It was all over. There was a new world ahead, waiting to be discovered.

A good job was the first thing. A decent job. Once she found one, she knew happily that she would pay bills from a bank balance instead of a phony set of engraved plates. She would be on the square!

But jobs were hard to find, even for a girl whose name was "Mary Brown."

As the Citizens National Bank, for instance, a man named Rhodes had to turn her down. They didn't need stenographers. But somehow she got the notion that he hated to say no.

There was kindness in his deep-set eyes, generosity in his young, good-looking face. She remembered for days afterward how nice he had been. She even daydreamed of going back another time and hearing him say yes. Through turn-down after turn-down, she remembered that man, Rhodes.

The chance came with the unexpectedness of a granted wish in a fairy tale.

Gilda was halting her modest roadster at a red traffic light that morning, when other brakes screeched ahead of her. Somebody screamed. She saw a girl—a girl with a familiar face—fall before a skidding car. She was out of her seat in a split second, running.

"I know this girl, officer. I'll drive her to the hospital!"

"Stand back!" It was a traffic officer's grim bellow.

"I know this girl, officer. I'll drive her to the hospital."

She did. And then she had to find Rhodes again, at the bank, because the girl who had been hit was his secretary. Gilda had remembered her only because she somehow had remembered every detail of her first interview with the man.

She got the job. The job she wanted. A Miss Parson had to be advanced to the injured Miss Billings' place. And that left a vacancy at the Parson desk.

Gilda was working, at last. Thousands of miles from Brewster's studio, she was starting life over. She was earning her way.

IT felt good—living honestly. Days without dread were a novelty. Men like Willian Rhodes were a new experience, too.

The people at the bank—people who seemed to like her—were a different breed from Hal Brewster and Smoky and Jason. Miss Parson annoyed her sometimes, whining about the switch in jobs; Mr. Rhodes kept her late, working, too late to suit her ideas about fun. But for the most part everything was perfect.

Gilda relaxed. She could forget, now, that there was such a thing as a fake-money artist in the world.

Only—she *couldn't* forget.

It happened one morning a few weeks after Bill Billings' accident. Briggs, the teller in cage three, had called for a statement, and Gilda brought it. She stood quietly, watching, while he counted currency. And suddenly, almost without thought, instinctive words from the past were on the lips of the Citizens' Miss Brown.

"That bill's counterfeit."

Up snapped Briggs' head.

"What bill?"

"That twenty. There, just under your hand. Examine the engraving. Look how the ink is off color, especially the green."

The twenty was a good job. Briggs hooted at her. Gilda stood her ground. And at last, to put her in her place, he went to Rhodes with it.

Across his wide desk, Gilda watched the man who wasn't like any man she'd ever known before turn the bill slowly, squint at it—and pronounce it genuine. Only his voice brought her back to the business at hand.

"Let me show you the defects, Mr. Rhodes. Look—here, and here. That machining was touched up by hand. Am I right?"

Rhodes answered slowly.

"I'm afraid you are. Briggs, I wonder how many of these we've passed."

"I don't know, sir." The teller was blinking stupidly. "She picked it from the other side of the cage, too, sir."

Dismissed then, he stumbled back to his job. But Gilda, turning to follow, was halted by Rhodes' voice—a new voice, warm with admiration.

"Miss Brown."

"Yes, Mr. Rhodes?"

"I want to thank you. Your alertness—I——" Looking at her, he seemed to forget what he had been intending to say. "We do thank you, Miss Brown."

AT home, in the little court bungalow, Gilda remembered through night hours how he had said that. William Rhodes—his eyes—his hair—his strong, square chin. William. Lying sleepless on her bed, she said the name over.

But she was a fool! She just wasn't the type to get excited about any man, she told herself fiercely, staring out at the stars.

Under those same stars, two widely different men were at that same moment getting excited about her.

In his handsome living room, William Rhodes was telling his mother about losing a secretary—Miss Parson. She had, it seemed, an insurmountable ob-

Except for the girl's intervention, they might have killed him.

jection to letting business interfere with pleasure. And Miss Brown was the logical person to put in. There was a girl! Mary Brown was a wonder; a mystery, perhaps, but a wonder. Mary Brown——

In a telegraph office downtown, a man with eyes like chips of slate was getting excited on yellow paper. Very excited. The dead eyes came alive and glittered when he turned in the blank.

HAL BREWSTER
FOUR ARTS BUILDING
NEW YORK CITY
HAVE LOCATED GILDA WORKING IN BANK HERE STOP IS IT
YOUR FUNERAL OR HERS STOP
WIRE INSTRUCTIONS
SMOKY

GILDA started in Miss Parsons's place, as Rhodes had known he must ask her to.

It did him good to see Mary Brown at that desk every morning. There was a glow about her, a special brightness that somehow spelled Mary. That first glimpse of her as he came in the door had become the high spot of his days.

One morning, there were some sketches lying on her desk. One of an old adobe house under eucalyptus trees. He saw them, with a start of surprise.

"Not yours? They're exceptionally good!"

"Thank you." Her smile was like gay sunlight.

"When did you do these?"

"Oh—odd hours, early mornings. I used to draw—for a living."

Rhodes chuckled like an eager boy.

"I have a bit of an art collection myself."

"I didn't know a banker would be interested."

"You'd be surprised," he answered softly, "what some bankers are really interested in." And Gilda's heart leaped suddenly, estatically.

It was to leap again later that morning—in a very different way.

She was crossing the bank with some papers he wanted. Suddenly, a face sprang up before her. The man stood next to a guard named Jim. He was tall. Battered-looking. Hard-bitten.

Her voice was monotonous with the torturing effort to make it casual when she stopped before the guard. Cool and aloof outside, her heart a sinking dead weight, she managed the words:

"Jim, will you collect all the deposit slips after we close?" And then, on his "Yes, Miss Brown," she turned away. She mustn't hurry. She mustn't tremble.

"Hello, Gilda," Burke said softly. Burke—New York Police!

"I beg your pardon?"

She looked at him and through him. With easy disdain, then, she stepped around his big bulk. Rhodes' office door loomed ahead of her. And behind her —what?

"Talk about doubles!" Burke was muttering. "She's more like Gilda Gillespie than—— Name's Brown, you said?"

"Mr. Rhodes' secretary, sure. So they give badges to guys like you in New York, do they?"

The office door closed at her back. Gilda's eyes shut. Opened again. She blinked. A woman—a lovely, aristocratic lady with snowy hair—sat near Rhodes' desk.

Mrs. Rhodes, Sr., had come for a look at the girl she knew her son was in love with. She looked now. And what she saw made her smile softly.

"Miss Brown, isn't it? I should be very glad, my dear, if you'd dine with us Thursday."

Gilda managed to smile back.

"That's kind of you. But——"

"Fine! We'll expect you, then!" said old Mrs. Rhodes.

THE dinner was for Zarabella, the famous engraver.

Zarabella was more than a social lion. He was the perfect dinner guest, because he could tell a story that really amused. He was telling one to a fascinated audience when Gilda entered the huge living room.

It was about his first pupil. A lovely girl, as he described her. Beautiful. Talented. Eager to learn engraving. He had hoped great things for her work. Then—*pfft!*—she had disappeared.

"Once, afterward, I saw her. Once only. It is much later—a street. Dark. A taxi approaches me, slowing. Inside is Marion! She is in trouble, she says. Will I come with her, please? Will I help her? So I enter the cab——"

Two men had seized him. Men with guns. They took him to an old house. Flatly, he refused to do what they demanded of him.

Except for the girl's intervention, they might have killed him with their guns. She had made them blindfold him and leave him alone on a street far from the house, safe and alive.

What had they wanted? Zarabella explained to his breathless audience that they were counterfeiters. They had needed technical help with a plate for twenty-dollar bills which was——

Rhodes' pleasant voice, behind him, said: "Señor Zarabella, here's a kindred soul. Miss Brown." Zarabella turned. And Gilda, waiting sick and breathless, saw recognition dawning in his eyes.

"As a matter of fact," she managed to say, "I was the Señor's first pupil." And waited for the ax to fall. Waited for Rhodes to learn the ugly truth.

Quickly regaining his composure, Zarabella said smoothly: "My second. I have been talking this evening about my first. A girl, yes. But a counterfeiter!" Everyone laughed, young Bill Rhodes the loudest of all. Pretty little Mary Brown a counterfeiter? The joke amused them all.

Hour after hour the party went on. Laughter filled the rooms. Everyone was gay. Gilda Gillespie might be sick at heart; but Mary Brown laughed as lightly as any one. Hour after hour.

Once, somehow, Bill Rhodes got her

alone with him. They were talking about etchings and an artist named MacWhitter who could do silver birches—catch their silver loneliness—— There was a breathless pause. Then:

"Mary!" the man whispered. She turned. He caught her in his arms. Their lips met. "Mary!"

"Please—don't."

"I'm no great lover, I know, but—if you'd marry me——"

A pain stabbed deep inside her then. A new, two-edged pain that she knew would never leave her. Because she wasn't fit for him. She wasn't fit for any fine man to marry. Oh, and she did love him—this Bill Rhodes!

"I think we'd better get back to the living room with the others," she said stiffly, afraid to trust herself to answer his question.

They went back. But after that the evening was like a dizzy whirlpool. Her brain spun.

Why had Zarabella protected her? Generosity, perhaps. Maybe he saw how badly she *wanted* to be decent. But for whatever reasons——

Sadly, Gilda realized that none of the reasons mattered, now. She was what she was. Everything with Bill was over.

ONLY he didn't seem to know it was over.

He kept right on asking her. "No" wasn't an answer to Bill. He loved her. He wanted her.

"I wish you'd just forget about last night," Gilda begged, facing him across his desk late the next afternoon. It was closing time.

Gilda, waiting sick and breathless, saw recognition dawning in his eyes. She waited for the ax to fall.

"I'd rather not." He looked up suddenly. "Mary!"

"Yes, Mr. Rhodes?"

"Let's forget business formalities. Let's be real. Mary, you're only acting."

In fear, she drew back.

"No. Really. I—I just——"

"There's someone else, then?"

"No! I mean, y-yes!"

He laughed quickly, triumphantly, and swung around the desk to take her in his arms.

"You're the loveliest little liar in the world! Honey, I couldn't do a thing all day. I——"

He kissed her eagerly, and there wasn't strength in Gilda to resist him. Her heart went wild. This was wrong. He *couldn't* love her, if he knew!

"Bet I can work here all night, now!" he laughed. "With you everywhere around me."

"I—I'll see in the morning how much you've done."

He let her go at last.

"Good night, sweetheart."

"Good night—Bill."

Invisible wings buoyed the heels that carried her out of the office. There was a song in her breast when the bank's door clanged shut behind her.

Tomorrow need never come, after all—that tomorrow of Bill's finding out. The past was dead. She loved him. She could make him happy. Love was enough.

"Hello, Gilda, darling!" a hoarse voice grated.

Too late, she tried to draw back from the shadows that had fallen into step on either side of her. There was menace even in their twin silence.

"Smoky! Jason!"

"Fancy meeting you here," Smoky droned. "What a coincidence."

Cold terror gripped her.

"What do you want?"

"We don't want to lose you, now that we've found you."

THE apartment was a ground-floor layout on Cabot Street. And Hal Brewster was there, waiting with his habitual thin smile, when Gilda's escorts drew her through the door.

"Welcome home, Gilda," he greeted. His face was cunning, evil.

Her chin, trembling only a little, held high. "What are you after, Brewster?"

His eyes met hers.

"This bank job, my dear? Isn't it—er—too big to handle alone? You know our work. Systematic and efficient."

The girl paled, meeting that cold scrutiny. But she kept her head up. Bad odds never used to frighten her.

"You're wasting breath, Brewster. I'm through with all this."

"And working in a bank? Ha!"

"I'm through, I tell you! Why can't you leave me alone!"

Brewster's thin lips drew back.

"Why, indeed? We will. But the combination of their vault wouldn't be too——"

"No!"

"That's foolish. We'll crack it anyway. And then the cops'll nose around and you'll look like the leak on the inside anyway, won't you?" He led her to the door, opened it. She was free to go. "Get wise, Gilda! We want you with us. You used to be smart."

She brushed past him quickly, and hurried down the hall. She knew well enough why Hal had let her go. She couldn't squeal. And he thought she was scared enough to come back.

Well, she *was* scared. Deathly scared. Sick with fear.

NIGHT. The shrill, somehow terrifying clamor of a bell sliced abruptly through the pitch-thick blackness. To Gilda, suddenly awake, it sounded like a death knell.

Her hand was cold when it reached for the light switch. Small, gleaming beads dampened it before she could stumble to the telephone.

"Hello?"

It was Mrs. Rhodes. Her fine, gentle voice was choked with horror. She sounded like some one sobbing in a nightmare too hideous to be real.

"Mary! The bank's been robbed. Police just phoned. Bill hasn't been home all night, and he's nowhere to be found. Do you know where he might be?"

Bill!

"I'll go right down," Gilda heard herself saying. "I'll meet you at the bank." And all the while his name kept crying out inside her. Bill. Oh, Bill!

The clothes for her midnight errand were the first that came to her fumbling hands. Swiftly, distractedly, she dressed. Aunty's moon-face, haloed in white pigtails, popped in at the door. But she had to ask her questions twice before the shivering girl answered her.

"What's the matter, honey? What is it?"

"It's Brewster," Gilda sobbed, diving for the door. "He's robbed the Citizens National—ahead of schedule. And Bill is missing!"

That downtown drive in her little roadster was something she never could bear to remember afterward. Wheels hummed. Tires screamed when she made a corner. The motor roared, and wind howled in her ears.

She bent forward, urging the rocketing machine ahead, gripping the wheel in frenzied hands.

Bill—if they'd hurt him—if they——

Somehow, the bank's massive doors loomed before her. They stood open, despite the hour. Light poured out onto the inky pavement. Gilda sprang from

She met Burke's look again. . . . "They wouldn't kill him. I know, because I know who did this!"

the car, running forward like a panic-goaded animal.

THE place swarmed with officials. Burke was one of them. Others wore uniforms, and shields that glittered under the lights. Lights seemed to blaze everywhere. Beneath one of them, pale and pinched, Bill's mother huddled brokenly in a chair.

"They haven't heard from Bill. Not a word."

Gilda's arms went around the old lady.

"Now, don't get upset." She lifted her head over that older one. And there stood a police lieutenant, telling Sanborn, the bank's president, about it.

"They worked the combination, sir. Looks like an inside job. And it's a clean haul."

Sanborn glowered.

"I told Rhodes not to keep the Santa Fe bonds here. Three hundred and fifty thousand dollars' worth. Where *is* Rhodes?"

"Disappeared, sir. Davis, here, saw him enter the bank at eleven-thirty."

Gilda sprang to her feet.

"If you think Mr. Rhodes had anything to do with this," she shot at them clearly, "you're wasting your time."

It was Burke of New York who answered her. Coldly.

"Only one yegg I know of could open that vault without using soup. Harry Sims, from back East. One of Hal Brewster's boys." His eyes never left Gilda's face. She tried to match his insolent stare.

"Blood!" a patrolman's voice shouted suddenly, from inside Bill's office. "Look, sir! On Rhodes' desk. Spots have been cleaned from the carpet. But see—here, on the mahogany?"

Old Mrs. Rhodes screamed in agony. "My boy! They've killed my boy!" And Gilda knew in that instant—that stunned, electric fraction of a second—what she had to do.

She met Burke's look again, over the other woman's shoulder as she held her more tightly.

"No, darling, they wouldn't kill him. I know, because I know who did this!"

Burke's eyes gleamed.

"I thought you did."

"All right, cop." Gilda caught at his sleeve. "I'll lead you to them. But we have to act. Act fast!"

"You lead the way," Burke rapped.

"It's not that easy. I know Brewster. He'd have this place watched. Every move would be telephoned. They'd be gone before we got there. They might even—even——"

Burke knew what she meant. Wherever Brewster's cannon Smoky was, death wasn't far behind. "Where is this place?"

Gilda whirled toward him.

"I'll pretend to take Mrs. Rhodes home, then double back. They'll let me in. Meanwhile, your men——" Her voice broke, but she swallowed hard and hurried on. They had to get to Bill.

What might happen to her tomorrow didn't matter!

A SWIFT hiss of greenbacks, ruffled through expert, counting fingers, sliced the silence of the parlor at the Cabot Street apartment. Sharp breath sucked in eagerly. The tattoo of impatient fingers drummed a table's edge.

Smoky slouched in from the adjoining bedroom, closing the door with only a casual backward glance at what lay behind him. The others looked up, a question in each pair of gimlet eyes. Smoky grinned.

"Only tapped him. He'll wake up soon—maybe."

They swung back to the bank haul, leaving it at that. The soft, sibilant sound began again. Then a sharp ring cut across it. Brewster snatched for the telephone.

"Hello!"

The earpiece crackled. His look-out's voice came through.

"Brewster? Gilda left with the old lady. Taking her home, I guess. I followed them a little ways, then came back to phone. The cops have gone back to headquarters, too."

"All right, Jimmy. That'll be all." He hung up. The gang had suspended operations to watch him. He let them have the story, clipping it out triumphantly. "Not a clue behind us!"

"They've already pinned it on Rhodes, is my guess!" Harry snorted. "Them dumb clucks——"

Knuckles rapped the door on the hall side. There was purpose—alarm—in that knock. Sharp and urgent, it sounded. Jason swung against the panel.

"Who is it?"

"Gilda! Let me in quick!"

SHE slid through the narrow opening, heard the door click shut behind her again. The room seemed filled with riveted, suspicious eyes. They raked her like fire from a Tommy-gun. But—no Bill!

At her elbow, Jason growled.

"What's the idea you coming around here? Did you bring any cops?"

She dismissed him with a scornful glance.

Then Brewster spoke, drawling dryly, mockingly.

"Welcome to our city."

Gilda faced him. She knew what they were thinking; and they were right. But Bill wasn't here! She had to find him. And until she did, no matter what the risks were——

She made herself smile, slowly.

"You win."

"I always do!" Brewster's lips curled in a hangman's grin.

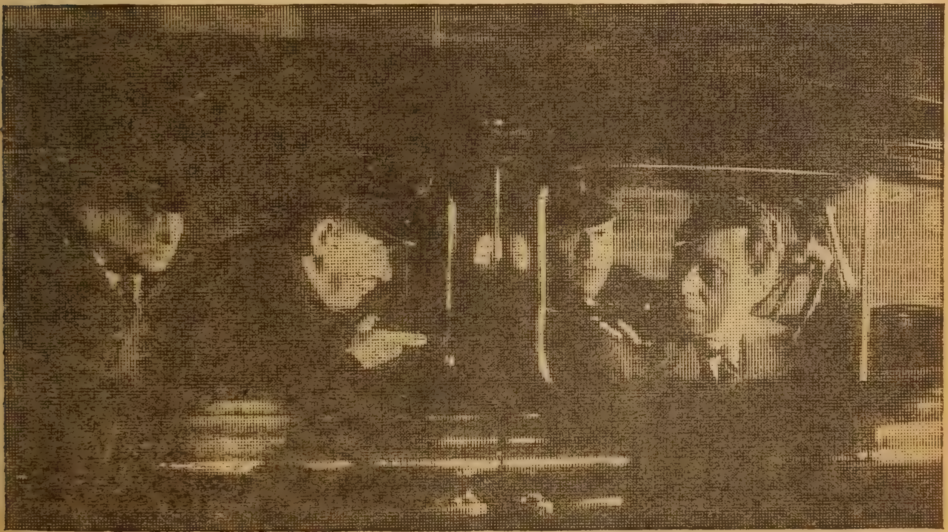
"Some haul!" She crossed quickly to the table. "Gee, this makes me feel good!"

"The good," Smoky leered viciously, "die young."

There was ice in Gilda's breast, where her heart should be. She knew what the killer meant, all right. But she kept on smiling.

"Hello, Smoky. That reminds me, what have you done with Rhodes? I'm not mixing into any rough stuff. Where is he?"

Brewster's curt nod indicated the bed-



The end of Brewster's flight for safety. ..A scene from the picture.

room. Slowly, casually, Gilda sauntered toward the door, wondering if at any step she might betray herself. Over the threshold. Out of their sight. Then her mask cracked.

The room was empty. The closet, then? Her fingers clawed as they found the knob.

He lay there, like a sack of meal, gagged and trussed. Bill! She was down on her knees, sobbing his name, ripping at his gag.

He blinked up dazedly.

"Where—are we—Mary?"

"Not so loud, darling! Don't get excited. They might hear us, and——"

The slightest sound—only a grating breath behind her—made her whirl. Across the bedroom, at the second door, Smoky stood with the lights from the parlor blazing garishly behind him. A wolfish grin distorted his sallow face.

In his steady hand, a gun was rising.

TRAPPED!

Gilda knew what would happen now. Any one who could see that look in Smoky's snake eyes would know. The gun glittered coldly as its muzzle lifted.

Sobbing, she lurched forward. Her hands, flung out in a frantic gesture, sped for the door. If only she could pull it between Bill and——

Cra-ack!

A little spurt of orange flame died in the echoes of that one explosion. Gilda felt something hit her hard, like a boxer's jab. She reeled back. But her hand still clung to the doorknob.

The panel slammed shut, its crash like an echo of the rod's thunder. Somehow she hung on, groping in the darkness that filled the little closet. The key! She had to find the key and——

Then all hell seemed to break loose in the apartment outside. Fists hammered. The sound of an ax, rending wood, cut to her. Shouts. Running footsteps. Some one was howling in alarm, "*It's the cops!*"

Glass smashed, a crash and then a showering tinkle. Gilda, reeling back from the door, heard Smoky's filthy curse. The closet knob rattled—and held. She must have locked it, then! It must—it——

Like a full-fledged war, the guns were blazing it outside. Gang rods and headquarters artillery—they sounded alike, crackling and barking.

Then a voice, topping the tumult, seemed to force it down into sudden stillness.

"All right, Brewster. You're all covered. Drop those gats."

Gilda crumpled against Bill's cramped body, her low sigh quivering into silence.

BILL'S voice said: "Poor kid. Poor little kid."

Gilda opened her eyes. They felt heavy, as if somebody had glued them shut. But when the room came into focus, there was Bill, kneeling on the bed beside her. He was smiling.

"I—I didn't mean to faint."

"Darling!" he whispered. Then, a she was reaching up for him, she remembered. Sobbing, she tried to draw away, tried to hide her face.

"You mustn't! I've already confessed to the police who I am."

But Burke was there, beyond Bill's shoulder. And all he did was grin, and say: "Good luck, *Miss Brown.*"

"From now on," Bill corrected, "the name will be Rhodes, officer."

Burke and the lieutenant, grinning some more, went out. It wasn't until he heard the door slam behind them that the young banker tried to look up from Gilda's eyes. Then, belatedly, he shouted after them.

"Hey, wait a minute! Where can I get a Justice of the Peace at this unearthly hour?"

Gilda crept against him.

"Unearthly isn't the word," she whispered. "It's heavenly."

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 79

WHIPSAW

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture with Myrna Loy, Spencer Tracy, Harvey Stephens, and William Harrigan.

G-men are still around in Hollywood. Miss Loy and Mister Tracy have collaborated on this one to make it one of the less spectacular but best acted pictures of this type to come from Hollywood. The story is concerned with how Miss Loy, one of a gang of jewel thieves, accidentally finds the straight and narrow road to her liking, as well as with how Tough-guy Tracy rounds up the criminals on behalf of the Department of Justice.

GOOD ENTERTAINMENT, FINE DIRECTION, SWELL PERFORMANCES, AND WHAT MORE COULD YOU ASK?

FRISCO WATERFRONT

A Republic picture with Ben Lyon, Helen Twelvetrees, Rod La Rocque, Russell Hopton, and Henry Kolker.

This is the success story of a man who hated his way up from being a dock-walloper on the Frisco waterfront to candidate for governor. It is powerful drama, and the qualities of suspense and action are added by the authentic scenes along the wharves of San Francisco just after the War.

THE TITLE DOESN'T BEGIN TO HINT THE DEEP MOVING STORY OF THIS DRAMA.

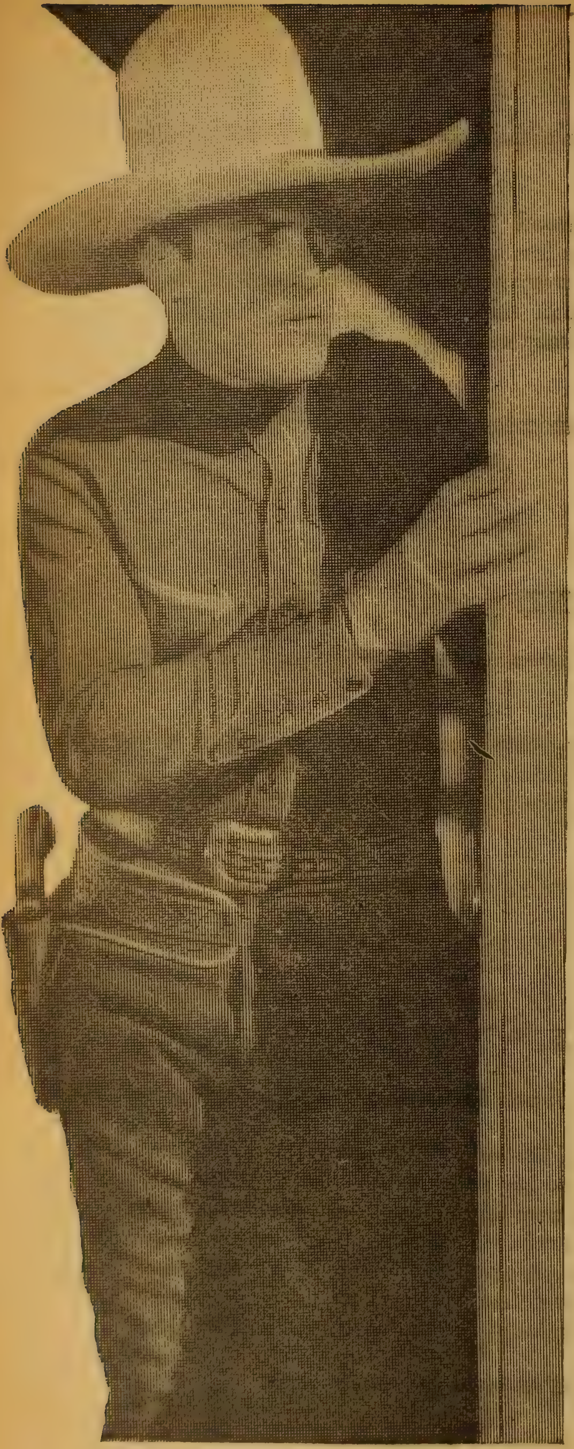
THE IVORY HANDLED GUN

A Universal picture with Buck Jones, Charlotte Wynters, and Walter Miller.

Buck Jones has long been one of the screen's hardest working cowboys. He's always been a hard riding, straight shooting son-of-a-gun, and this one is no let-down. If anything, it carries more punch than any he has done before. This latest movie tells the story of an ivory handled gun handed to Buck by his father to perpetuate a feud that has been going on for years and now must be handed down to another generation. It is full of suspense since, at first, he does not want to carry on what he believes is senseless bloodshed. But it winds up in a burst of action and fireworks.

ONE OF THE BEST WESTERNS WE'VE SEEN IN A LONG TIME.

Continued on page 124



Lawless Riders

Terror pounced on the little cow town, and three strangers fought it off!

ABOVE the rattling of the high wheels on the rocks, the girl inside the stage coach heard the crackle of shooting. She was the lone passenger in the Fantana stage. One minute she had been gazing at the painted rocks as they paused along the road, and the next the old stage had lurched ahead.

The girl had caught at the edge of the swaying door. Miraculously, she had gained a foot-hold and swung inside. A dozen men were riding hard behind the stage. One of the two men in the driver's seat suddenly rolled off and struck the ground before the girl's horrified eyes.

The first man to go was the shotgun messenger guarding the express box. The rocks resounded with the hammering of guns. The girl cried out as another body hurtled from the seat of the stage. This was the driver.

Driverless, the four stage ponies leaped ahead. The girl looked out at the flying rocks. To jump seemed certain death. Remaining in the stage meant only slightly more of a chance to live.

Of the dozen men who had attacked the coach, one tall figure forged ahead. He came

THE CAST

KEN MAYNARD	Ken Manley
GENEVA MITCHELL	Edith Adams
Harry Woods	"Big Bart"
Frank Yaconelli	Pedro
Wally Wales	Carl

Directed by Spencer Gordon Bennett
Story and screenplay by Nate Gatzert

A fictionization of the Columbia picture of the same title.

alongside the stage at a thundering gallop. The man was masked with a handkerchief. The girl could see that he was of immense size.

If this leader of the bandits saw the girl in the stage, he gave no sign. Riding close to the rocking vehicle, he reached up and pulled the money-laden express box from its place. Then he permitted his plunging horse to drop back.

The coach careened on at its mad pace. Back in the road lay the bodies of the express messenger and the driver. The whooping bandits ignored the dead men. They faded into the purple dusk back of the painted rocks.

KEN MANLEY, with Pedro and Carl, his partners, was camped in a draw not far above the stage road. Pedro was strumming on his guitar when a piercing scream echoed through the hills.

The lean, rawhide body of Ken Manley moved with flashing speed. His shrill whistle supplanted the song he had been singing. Nearby, a magnificent gelding tossed his head and started toward the campfire.

"C'mon, Tarzan!" barked Ken, reaching the horse's back with a single, running leap.

Pedro, the little Mexican, dropped his guitar. He was only a little slower than Carl, the tall cowboy of the outfit. Already Ken was riding Tarzan down the rocks.

"He no make it!" shouted Pedro, as the driverless stage swayed past on the road below.

Carl was on his horse, attempting to follow Ken, but he was forced to choose an easier descent.

"Great coyotes! A girl!"

Ken Manley gritted the words into Tarzan's ear. He was bending low over the neck of the running horse. The girl's white face had showed at the edge of the swaying stage door. Packages tumbled into the road. A long rope with

The coach careened on at its mad pace.

which they had been tied was trailing behind the stage.

Ken Manley set himself for a jump from Tarzan's back to the flying stage. The horse caught a forefoot on one of the falling packages, stumbled and crashed forward. For an instant, Ken was clutching at air. Then one hand gripped the trailing rope.

The girl in the stage ceased to breathe. Ken Manley's body was whipped cruelly along the road. But both his hands were holding now. The rawhide muscles of his shoulders pulled him ahead.

Ken's body, then his feet swung clear of the road. Bruised and shaken, he rolled over the top of the driverless stage onto the driver's seat and still further! Twice he slipped and nearly fell under the feet of the maddened ponies!

When he had caught the leathers of the leaders, Ken got back to the driver's seat. His booted feet slipped in a pool of liquid and the cowboy swore under his breath. He did not need to be told the driver had been shot off the seat.

Ken whistled softly to himself as he helped the trembling girl from the stage a few moments later. Even with her white face, she was as pretty a picture as Ken Manley had ever seen. She swayed into his arms.

"Yuh shore had a narrow squeak, ma'am," said Ken. "You live hereabouts?"

The girl steadied herself with one small hand on Ken's shoulder.

"Yes—in Fantana. My father, Charles Adams, own the State Bank there. I am Edith Adams."

As Pedro and Carl rode up, Edith Adams was telling Ken of the holdup attack and the double murder. A few minutes later, the stage minus its murdered driver and messenger was rolling toward the wild border town of Fantana.

BEFORE the stage arrived, three men entered Fantana at a speed which raised clouds of alkali dust. They reined up in a final cloud before a ramshackle building with a tall false front. From this building came the pounding of boots and the terrible discords of a tinpanny piano.

A big man preceded the other two into the saloon. There were immediate shouts of "Hi-ya, Bart! H'lo, Twister! Howdy, Prod!"

"Big Bart" Barlow was known as a cattle buyer. He greeted a man who smiled in friendly fashion. This man was Judge Burke.

"How're yuh, Bart?" greeted Judge Burke. "How's the cattle buying business?"

"Fine, judge, pickin' up great," declared Big Bart heartily. "Line up, everybody! I'm buyin'!"

As the crowd in the saloon rolled toward the bar, the alkali dust of Fantana again arose in a cloud. From it emerged the Fantana stage. The sheriff was among the first to reach the bullet-scarred coach.

Ken's cool gray eyes looked down at the sheriff.

"How come you're drivin' this stage coach, stranger?"

"Bandits shot up the rightful driver," said Ken briefly.

"What's that—another holdup?"

Ken was on the ground, assisting the girl from the stage. A voice cried out and a gray-haired man hurried forward. The girl was instantly in the man's arms.

The sheriff was looking at Ken Manley with a hostile eye.

"How'd it happen you was thereabouts, mister?" he demanded.

Edith Adams freed herself from her father's arms. She laid one hand on Ken's shoulder and smiled at the cowboy.

"I absolutely vouch for this man, sheriff," she said. "Why, he saved my life."

The sheriff turned back to a deputy.

"Round up a posse, Jack!" he ordered. "Nothing much we can do, but we'll have a try at it!"

Edith Adams meets the pals of the man who has just saved her life.

The deputy's announcement of the stage holdup quieted the crowd in the saloon. Big Bart Barlow roared with wrath.

"Outrages like this should be punished!" he shouted. "It's too bad we ain't got time to join in the chase! Hope you get 'em!"

In the rush to join the posse, none noticed the muttered conversation between Big Bart and his two partners, "Prod" and "Twister." It was evident from Big Bart's smile that he had little faith in the ability of a sheriff's posse.

Others in Fantana felt much the same. Recently, gold claims had been robbed, stages held up and various other crimes committed by a mysterious gang of bandits. Not a single clue to any of these crimes had been discovered.

Perhaps half the men in the roaring saloon joined the posse.

"And if this posse comes back empty handed," announced Big Bart loudly for the benefit of the half that remained, "I'm for working out a plan that'll rid this country of every bandit hereabouts."

Bart's two companions nodded enthusiastically.

"I'll bet my life you could find them, too," Prod grinned.

THE sheriff and his posse had galloped into the night hills. Judge Burke, Charles Adams, the banker, Edith and Ken had been in the small courthouse. Judge Burke's solemn, dignified face was lined with worry.

The judge held a small silver badge in his hand. Ken Manley smiled at him, but shook his head firmly.

"I don't want to be deputy U. S. marshal, judge," he declared. "I've seen enough of gun-fights and bloodshed. From now on I'm a man of peace."

Edith Adams looked into Ken's cool,

gray eyes. She must have found his clean-cut features pleasing. She nodded agreement with what he had said and smiled.

"All of you will come to supper, won't you?" she invited.

"That's one form of slaughter I'll go for," replied Ken. "I'll round up my pards."

With Edith Adams' smile still in mind, Ken Manley found the dismal, dusty street of Fantana mighty attractive. Where the oil lamps glared in the saloon, he heard the strains of Pedro's guitar.

Men's boots shuffled in time to the music. Pedro was singing an old song. The tinpanny piano was silent. Ken grinned. He hoped Pedro and Carl were not too far gone to attend that supper.

As Ken stepped through the door, there was a scuffling sound and a loud oath.

"I'll l'arn yuh to come stampedin' into me!" roared a bull-like voice.

Ken stepped inside. The biggest man in the room was gripping little Pedro's shoulder. He held the precious guitar high in the air. In the fraction of a second, Pedro's prize possession would have been draped around his ears.

Ken Manley moved with the slashing speed of a whip. One lean hand fastened on the heavy wrist of Big Bart Barlow. A gasp of pain came from Big Bart's lips. He was looking into the suddenly icy eyes of the man who had brought back the stage.

The guitar had unaccountably been restored to Pedro's hands.

Big Bart roared, "What're you cuttin' in for?"

"Just ridin' herd on one of my pards," said Ken quietly.

Big Bart clawed at his heavy gun in its holster. Feet scuffed as the saloon crowd dove for shelter.

Ken Manley hardly seemed to have moved his hands. But one gun had slid from its holster as if it had been greased. Its point lay over Big Bart's wrist. Bart's own gun was not halfway from its leather.

Big Bart looked wildly around. Prod and Twister, his companions, were directly in front of Ken Manley. They saw Ken's thumb was hooked ready to produce his other gun.

"I—I guess I musta lost my temper," stammered Big Bart. "C'mon, let's have a drink."

"No, thanks," said Ken calmly. "C'mon, Pedro, Carl, we've got other business."

Big Bart, Prod and Twister stared directly at Ken's back as he walked quietly from the saloon. Big Bart's lips were twisting with rage. But his hand only hovered over his gun—he did not draw.

"Let's wait," muttered Big Bart to the others. "We've got too much at stake to start a gun-fight now."

If Ken Manley heard the words, he gave no sign. But it was apparent to the contemptuous crowd in the saloon that Big Bart had been bluffed on a gun draw.

FOLLOWING the supper at the home of Edith Adams, Ken Manley almost regretted not having accepted the post of deputy U. S. marshal. But he discovered other reasons for sticking to Fantana.

Chief of these reasons, of course, was Edith Adams herself. But she was not all.

Ken had too long been a lonely rider of the mountains and deserts. He was thirsty for the simple fun to be found in a frontier town. And to-night one attraction drew even those who would usually have been in the Fantana saloon.

Gay with colors, the old Adams barn had been converted into a place of entertainment. It had been Edith's idea. The barn dance was being given for the benefit of the family of the murdered stage coach driver.

Pedro, with his beloved guitar, and

Ken, with his harmonica and his singing, were furnishing much of the music for the barn dance. All the inhabitants of Fantana were attending the dance.

Prominent among those present was Big Bart Barlow. The cattle buyer seemed to be in an excellent humor. For this, Big Bart had a reason known only to himself and his outside companions.

Tonight was to be a gala occasion not only for Fantana, but for the bandit gang of the county. The robbery of the State Bank owned by Charles Adams would be an accomplished fact within a few hours. And none could ever say Big Bart Barlow had any hand in the theft.

For his alibi, Big Bart made himself conspicuous at the barn dance. He was accompanied by Twister, one of his closest companions.

Among the girls in the "dance booth" was Edith Adams. Over this booth was the sign,

"One Dance for Charity—$1."

Ken Manley was singing and Pedro was playing. Big Bart put a dollar in the dance box. He smiled at Edith Adams.

"I choose you," he announced.

The girl smiled and swung into Big Bart's arms. Ken Manley saw the pair. He had not known until this moment how much Edith had come to mean to him.

When his song was finished, Ken

Ken Manley moved with the slashing speed of a whip.

walked over to a booth where an Indian squaw was telling fortunes.

"My fortune wouldn't be much," Ken grinned, "but maybe it's worth a dollar."

The Indian squaw looked deep into a flaming dish. She spoke suddenly.

"Me see um pale-face girl—much black hair—pale face brave love um much——"

"Guess yuh throwed the right loop that time," muttered Ken.

But the Indian squaw held up her hand.

"I see um more," she said. "I see um bad man—much trouble—smell um powder—hear um shots—see death!"

WHEN the dance had stopped, Edith Adams had made her way toward Ken. She took his arm and led him to a secluded corner.

"Ken!" she breathed. "That man—Big Bart—I'm certain he was one of the bandits who held up the stage! That ornamental clasp on his neckerchief—I'll never forget it. It was on the leader of that gang when he rode past——"

Neither saw the shadowy figure near them in the corner of the barn. Nor did they knew that the man, Twister, hurried off at once to find Big Bart Barlow.

A few seconds later Twister was talking to Big Bart in a quiet spot.

"That gal you was dancin' with has yuh branded fer a bandit," said Twister. "I dunno how, but she was tellin' that cow waddie."

Big Bart scowled heavily.

The floor of the old barn was rocking. But few persons in Fantana had stayed away from that dance.

"Streak it for Fantana," snarled Big Bart. "Tell Prod and the others to clean out the whole town! Then we're blowin' the country. Savvy?"

"Yup. An' you?" said Twister.

"I'll stick here an' see what I can learn," said Big Bart. "Now mount up an' breeze, an' make it a real haul this time."

Ken Manley had left Edith Adams to find Big Bart Barlow. He was close enough to hear Big Bart's order to Twister. Ken slid from a side door of the barn. A horse's feet pounded away into the night.

A low whistle came from Ken's lips. He made a flying mount as Tarzan came dashing out of the darkness. If he was to discover the destination of Big Bart's right-hand man, Twister, he had no time to summon help!

THE street of Fantana appeared to be deserted. Ken Manley slid from Tarzan's back. Unobserved by Twister he had trailed the man to a point near the bank. Ken saw now what was taking place.

The State Bank of Edith Adams' father was being looted!

Ken heard Twister approaching the front of the bank, walking. He slipped around the side to a window. Looking inside, Ken saw Prod directing the moving of sacks out of the vault.

Ken pressed his face to the window. Already he had identified several of the bandits as men he had seen in company with Big Bart. Ken judged he might be able to surprise the lookout and corner those inside single-handed.

He started to draw his gun, tiptoeing toward the front of the bank. Behind him a sharp oath and the crack of a forty-five came together. Twister stood there, an evil smile on his face.

Ken felt as if the top of his skull had been torn off. He tried to turn, but everything became black.

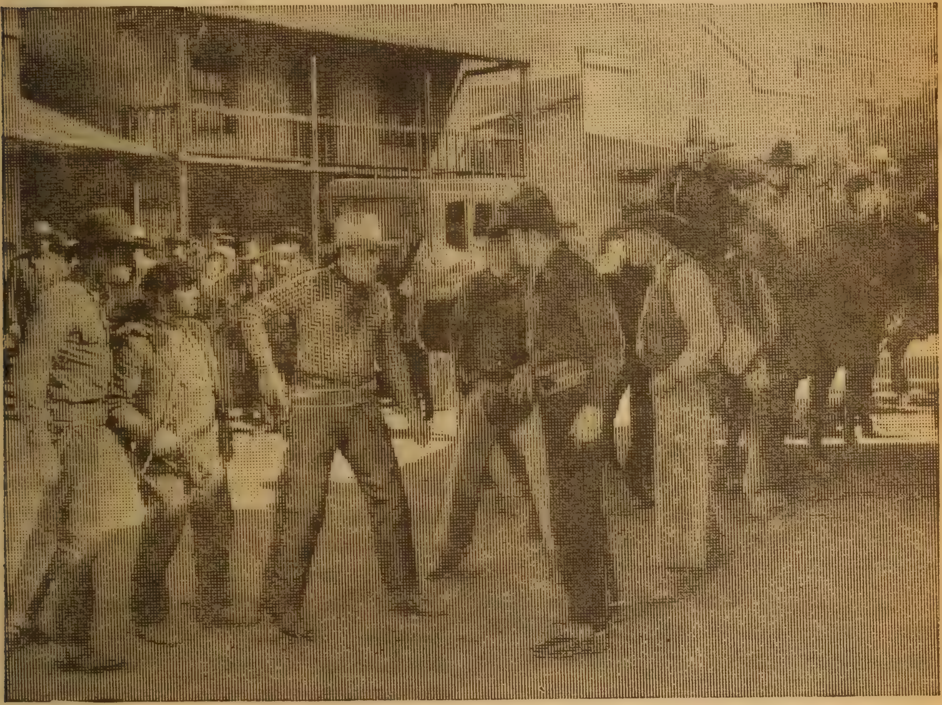
In his office, the sheriff heard the booming of Twister's gun. Accompanied by two deputies and the fat jailer, the sheriff rushed to the gun rack. A minute later the small force thudded along the street toward the bank.

"Here, sheriff!" shouted a voice. "Over to the bank!"

The voice was that of Prod. The man was holding a gun in his hand.

"Some *hombre* was robbin' the bank as I come along!" asserted Prod. "I shot through the window an' I guess I got 'im!"

Prod flipped an empty shell from his gun. The sheriff did not know that same gun had been in Twister's hand less than two minutes before.



Ken hardly seemed to have moved his hands. But one gun slid from its holster as if it had been greased.

The door of the bank vault swung open. In front of it a man lay on his face. His hair was matted with blood. The sheriff turned the limp body over with a booted foot.

"Well, I'll be damned!" he grated. "Ken Manley!"

Prod laughed nastily. He winked at Twister.

"No wonder he was around when the stage coach was held up," he said. "He's prob'ly responsible for all the crimes we've been havin' hereabouts."

The sheriff shook his head sadly.

"This'll be tough on Judge Burke, an' the Adams gal," he said slowly. "He's only been creased. Better if he'd been killed."

A FEW hours later the street of Fantana was choked with booted, swearing men. They openly rumbled threats of lynching. But in the sheriff's office two deputies stood guard with shotguns.

"We'll have no miscarriage of justice in this town," declared the sheriff.

Alkali dust stirred by the milling feet outside lay thickly over the interior of the small jail. The sweet face of Edith Adams was gray with the dust as she stood before the bars of one small cell.

"But I know you're not guilty!" the girl said emphatically.

"As long as you trail with me, Edith, nothing else matters," said Ken.

The cowboy's gray eyes told the girl their own story. Her hand caressed Ken's arm through the bars.

"I'll have father arrange bail for you," she said.

The voice of the sheriff spoke behind them.

"Don't figger on that too strong. The state law don't permit bail on murder charges."

Edith's face became even whiter than the alkali dust.

"Murder?" she gasped.

"Your father's bank watchman was beaten to death during the robbery," said the sheriff grimly. "Time's up, Miss Adams, you'll have to go."

The sheriff accompanied Edith outside. The crowd in the street jeered and cursed. The sheriff held up his hand.

"There'll be no mob rule in this town!" he shouted. "I'll protect the prisoner to the last bullet of myself and my men!" He sent Edith Adams slowly back toward her father's bank.

Her progress was noticed by three men who talked in low voices. They were Big Bart, Prod and another of his men called Joe.

"There she goes now," said Bart. "She's the one who suspects us. Do like I told you, and make sure she hears you talking!"

EDITH restrained her tears as she entered her father's office.

"They've accused Ken of murder," she said miserably. "You must do something to help him."

Edith's father stroked his chin and spoke slowly.

"There's nothing I can do," he said, and paused. "Besides, I'm not so sure he isn't guilty."

The banker was silent for a moment at the girl's sharp cry.

"I'm afraid," he said, "I'll have to ask you not to visit him at the jail again."

The girl's face set stubbornly and her eyes glowed.

"But I will! And I'll help him prove his innocence, no matter what anyone thinks!" she cried.

As Edith came from the bank door, she heard two men talking. She did not recognize them as Big Bart's henchmen, Prod and Joe.

"Of course," Prod was saying, "I don't want to get mixed up in this, but I bet I could uncover somethin' that would save this Manley from the rope."

Joe mumbled a reply and said, "What is it?"

Edith stood tensely to one side listening.

"Well," said Prod, "at the head of Injun Trail up in Hidden Valley, there's a cabin an' an old hermit that knows the band of outlaws that's been causin' all the trouble."

Edith heard Joe argue they should tell the sheriff. Prod refused. Said he was afraid of his life. Prod then went on into the bank. Joe walked slowly away.

A few minutes later, Edith Adams had found Carl, Ken's rawboned cowboy pardner. She hastily divulged what she had heard. The excitable Carl hurriedly procured saddle horses.

Big Bart and Prod saw them ride from Fantana in a cloud of dust.

"It worked!" exulted Big Bart. "C'mon! We'll be there to welcome 'em!"

WHEN Edith Adams and Carl rode up to the isolated cabin in Hidden Valley, they were not aware that great gates made of brush had closed behind them. They did not suspect this was the hide-out of Big Bart Barlow and his gang.

Carl's knock on the cabin door was answered by a thin voice. The door swung open.

Edith cried out a warning, but it was too late.

Edith Adams cried out a warning, but she was too late. The loyal Carl groaned and pitched on his face.

The butt of a gun in the hands of Prod had cracked down on his skull. Big Bart Barlow stood in the middle of the cabin, smiling.

"What—what is this?" stammered the bewildered girl.

"Consider yourself my honored guest, Miss Adams," rumbled Big Bart. "No harm'll come to you—as long as you stay here."

The girl sank tremblingly into a chair.

Outside the cabin, Prod threw a body from his shoulder. It was as dead as a sack. Carl's neck was limp and blood flowed from the cut on his head.

"Tie him up!" Prod ordered one of the guards at the corral.

"Why go to all that trouble?" said the man. "He's clean out."

"Do as I tell yuh, then get back and guard the cabin!" snarled Prod.

PEDRO entered the office of the jail in Fantana. He had come to see his *amigo,* Ken Manley. The Mexican's gun was taken away by the fat jailer who was Ken's lone guard.

"Me no bring nothin'," complained Pedro as the jailer searched him thoroughly. "Come see Ken."

Satisfied at last that Pedro carried nothing more dangerous than the guitar on his back, the fat jailer resumed his seat. After a few words of conversation, Pedro complained, "This-a jail, she's too dull—how's about some-a sweet moosic?"

"Shore," agreed the jailer. "A tune never hurt no one."

The Mexican's hands plucked nimbly at the strings. The jailer did not notice that Pedro had backed close to Ken's barred door. Nor did he see the hacksaw hung by a string in the belly of the guitar as it was pulled out and passed into Ken's hands.

The fat jailer was a jolly fellow. Pedro could make music. He played and sang loudly. Soon the jailer was joining in the chorus of "She was Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage," and other old-timers.

Pedro carefully maintained his position. The music drowned all grating of the hacksaw now in Ken Manley's hands. The saw was slowly severing the bolt of the cell!

MEANWHILE, in the mountain darkness, Carl emerged from painful unconsciousness. He discovered he had been left tied to a thin pole of the corral near Big Bart's cabin. The lanky cowboy heaved to his feet. The pole holding him snapped off.

Moving cautiously, Carl caught one of the horses. Figuring the direction of the entrance by which they had arrived, the cowboy craftily led the way down the mountain. Dizzy with pain, the waddie almost gave up.

The sight of the valley beyond a half domed rock revived him. When he had led his horse over the divide, he crawled groggily into the saddle and rode off in the direction of Fantana.

It was nearly midnight as he came in sight of the lights of the town.

Pedro was still playing, and the fat jailer was singing with him at the top of his voice. Behind Pedro's back the hacksaw was almost through the bolt of the cell door.

At this moment there was a commotion outside. A horse came running down the dusty street. The gangling cowboy, Carl, thudded to the ground from the saddle. A crowd pressed around him.

"What is it, Carl? What's happened?" came the voice of Judge Burke, who had pushed his way to the man on the ground.

"Edith Adams—held prisoner by Big Bart—Hidden Valley——"

The sheriff pushed others aside.

"Edith held prisoner?" he demanded. "By Bart? But why?"

"He's the leader of the outlaws!" gasped Carl.

Shouting for a posse, the sheriff ran into the jail office. His deputies snatched guns from the racks.

"What is it? What's up, sheriff?" said the fat jailer.

"Bandits!" shouted the sheriff. "They've captured Edith Adams!" Then he was gone to lead his posse!

Ken Manley yelled in frenzy, "Let me out! Let me out of here."

He threw his strength against the door of the cell, but the bolt failed to yield. He was still hammering madly at the bars when the horses of the posse pounded down the single street, and faded away into the night.

The jailer and Pedro were still in the office. Ken backed up and threw his full strength against the door. It burst open!

"Get back! Get back, or I'll shoot!" yelled the fat jailer.

His gun whipped into his hand. Pedro's guitar went up in the air and came down. It smashed around the jailer's head. The gun exploded, but his bullets flew wild.

Outside the jail, Ken's shrill whistle caused a horse to jerk loose from the hitching rack. A few seconds later, Ken was on Tarzan's back. He reined up as he saw Carl still lying on the ground.

"What happened?" said Ken. "Yuh bad hurt?"

"I'm a' right," muttered Carl thickly. "But get to Edith—head for a half dome rock in Hidden Valley—it's a short cut an' unguarded."

Ken lay low on Tarzan's neck as the big horse raced out of town. Guided by Carl, he angled off at a direction different from that taken by the sheriff's posse.

TWO miles out of town, the trail was cut by the slash of a canyon. Getting down, Ken saw where Carl had been forced to skirt around it. He estimated the depth of that cut. Then, reining Tarzan back, he gave the horse his head. For a breathless second or two, horse and rider were in midair.

Ken's knuckles caught the outlaw under the jaw!

Tarzan gained his balance. His forefeet slid in the loose gravel of the breakneck incline. Horse and rider shot on down the canyon wall!

"That'd be the half dome rock," Ken muttered later.

Then he was forced to rein Tarzan in. Far above, he could make out the lights of a cabin. But there appeared to be no break in the sheer cliff. Ken judged he might waste many minutes finding the way down.

Then he noticed a pinnacle dimly outlined above him. A trail seemed to rise from there. With a grunt, Ken loosened his lariat. He caught a loop around the craggy mass, and tugged at it tentatively. It held!

"Hold 'em, big boy!" he said into Tarzan's ear.

He swung slowly on the rope's end for a moment. Then, inch by inch, he began pulling himself up into the inky blackness!

EDITH ADAMS backed away from Big Bart. The outlaw's voice was thick with liquor. He caught at the girl's arms. They were alone in the cabin.

"C'mon, let's get acquainted," he laughed.

"Leave me alone!" the girl cried out.

Big Bart laughed again, thickly. His big hands held the girl helpless. Edith screamed.

Her voice cut through the gloom outside where Ken Manley could see through the window of the cabin. With a push of his feet, he threw his lean body directly into the window glass.

Big Bart snorted a startled oath. He released the girl and swung. His hand pawed the gun from his holster. But the whip-like body of Ken Manley had shot across the room.

His powerful fingers locked on Big Bart's gun wrist. Big Bart's fist smashed into Ken's face. Ken's knuckles caught the outlaw under the jaw. The gun twisted loose and fell to the floor.

Big Bart brought up one knee. Ken was knocked to his back. Big Bart dropped and clawed for the fallen gun. It was Edith's foot that touched the gun just in time and kicked it from Big Bart's reach!

Ken and Big Bart again were locked in a hand-to-hand struggle. Blood covered Ken's face. One of his eyes was closed. Edith picked up the fallen gun as Big Bart's fist buried itself in Ken's stomach. Another blow to the chin sent Ken to the floor. Big Bart stood over him.

Edith backed against the wall. She stared, dumb with horror, past the two bloody men. Her eyes were riveted on the window through which Ken had entered.

The long barrel of a rifle poked in. The scarred face of one of Big Bart's henchmen lay beside the stock!

The man outside aimed deliberately at Ken's body on the floor. A shot rang out. The rifle clattered inside the cabin. The gunman cursed wildly and staggered back, clutching a broken shoulder.

Edith stood staring at the gun in her hand. Smoke came from the muzzle. She hardly realized it was she who had fired that shot!

Big Bart was aiming a kick at Ken's head. Ken's hands snapped out and caught the outlaw's ankles. Bloody and battered, Big Bart crashed to the floor on top of his prone opponent, hitting and gouging!

DURING this time, the sheriff and his men had found themselves blocked by what appeared a solid wall. As they inspected it for a passage through, a withering rifle fire suddenly poured into the posse.

Employing their knowledge of the hide-out, Twister and his men had succeeded in flanking the sheriff's posse!

One of the sheriff's deputies discovered the hidden gate.

"Smash it down!" yelled the sheriff. "Wipe 'em out!"

Inside the barrier, a renegade with a wounded shoulder stumbled toward Twister and the others.

"Feller—up in the cabin—beatin' up Big Bart!" he gasped.

He sank down, groaning over the shoulder where Edith Adams' bullet had torn his flesh and shattered the bone.

Twister and two other men ran toward the cabin.

"Cut 'em off!" shouted the sheriff, seeing what he took to be a frantic retreat.

But he and his deputies found themselves still blocked by a cross-fire from the rest of Big Bart's bandits concealed in a group of rocks. Twister and the other pair swung on through the brush to the cabin window!

Through the sheriff's posse a hundred yards away came the pounding of a horse's feet. A magnificent white animal emitted a shrill scream of anger.

"By crickety!" yelled the sheriff. "That's Ken Manley's horse! Yuh don't suppose that hombre busted jail?"

In the cabin, Ken had just staggered Big Bart backward with a straight smash on the nose. Big Bart was pawing the air.

"This'll stop 'im!" grated Twister.

He raised his forty-five, taking careful aim.

Twister swore as the hammer of his gun fell upon an empty shell. The hammer clicked again. Ken Manley backed toward the window, ready for Big Bart Barlow's next rush.

Twister grabbed a gun from one of the other men. He was lifting it when a white thunderbolt burst from the bushes.

Twister was lifted clear of the ground! His gun flamed, but the outlaw had been thrown a dozen feet! As he scrambled up, he yelled in fright and started running.

With bared teeth and forefeet lifted high, Tarzan pounded down upon him. The other two men ran for the cliff. Bullets from the sheriff's posse ended their flight abruptly.

Inside the cabin, Big Bart had moved around a table. Now he hurled this suddenly toward Ken. But the lean cowboy leaped from the spot, to take advantage of the effort which pulled Big Bart off his balance.

Ken's fist whipped out on a stiff arm. Big Bart groaned and crashed forward on his face!

LEADING his deputies who had lined up half a dozen outlaws who were still alive, the sheriff pushed open the cabin door. At the same moment, Tarzan stuck his head through the broken window.

The horse bared his teeth. He threw up his head and whinnied.

"That's right, you're an understandin' nag," muttered the sheriff. Then he closed the cabin door softly.

He had seen Edith Adams and Ken, and everything was all right once more.

Ken was a terrible looking figure with his closed eye and numerous bruises on his face. But the girl was holding him tightly in her arms.

"I shore don't know what to say," muttered Ken through his swollen lips.

"There isn't anything more to be said," murmured the girl. "Not for a while, yet, anyway."

"SPY 77"

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STARRING GRETA NISSEN AND CARL DIEHL

IN NEXT MONTH'S MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE

MASTERS OF HORROR

How the world champion bogey-men got that way.

THERE are all sorts of pictures. There are comedies, light romances, Westerns, mysteries, musicals, and possibly a dozen other different classifications. And for each of these, there are hundreds of capable stars and featured players. But there is no type in which there are so few able actors as in horror pictures.

Good advice to any one who is Hollywood-bound to try his luck in the movies is—*don't try to be another Gable or Maynard or Cagney; be a Karloff!*

You can go back over the history of the film industry, and you'll be able to count the successful horror actors on your fingers. Try it and see. Lon Chaney, Bela Lugosi, Boris Karloff, Henry Hull, Peter Lorre, Fredric March and John Barrymore (if you want to count their productions, years apart, of DOCTOR JEKYLL AND MISTER HYDE), and maybe Claude Rains (for his INVISIBLE MAN). But that's all. So you can see what a constant demand there must be for some one with the talent to scare people.

The trouble is that they don't hold tryouts for bogey-men. Even if they did, they wouldn't know who to test because the men whom the whole world has come to associate with horror and gruesomeness are the nicest sort of fellows in private life. Karloff is crazy about his dogs. Lon Chaney was a tap dancer long before he went to Hollywood to become the deformed cripple in MIRACLE MAN. Henry Hull, only a short time ago, was playing young and romantic leads on the Broadway stage.

How did they all get to be the grotesque characters which have haunted thousands of dreams? Luck. And hard work.

TAKE Lon Chaney, for instance. He died an untimely death several years ago, although his memory is still fresh in the hearts of hundreds of those who knew him personally while he lived, as well as the millions who thrilled to his performances.

Lon Chaney has been described countless times as "the sweetest trouper that ever hit Hollywood!" Just a pretty good dancer in vaudeville, he happened to be in the right place when casting was going on for Thomas Meighan's MIRACLE MAN. They wanted a cripple, and Chaney said that he could be just as good a cripple as the next man, so he got the job. But his enthusiasm was short lived when he saw what it meant to be a "cripple" in the movies.

Since the part called for a man whose legs had been amputated at the knees, it was necessary for Chaney to work with his ankles strapped tightly back against his upper legs. Only a trained dancer could have gotten his legs into such a position. And only a super-man could have stood the strain of being strapped like that for lengthy periods!

The pain was so intense that Chaney could hardly speak while he was strapped up. Luckily, speaking wasn't necessary in those days of silent films, so that didn't matter much. What *did* matter was that

The immortal Lon Chaney as the "Hunchback of Notre Dame."

he was under orders from the physicians of the producing company to work only ten minutes out of every hour with his legs strapped up.

Chaney was inclined to laugh at this order, even though the pain was so bad, until he tried working over that limit. He got to the twelve-minute mark and then toppled over onto the floor without a sound. Because of the pain, and the stoppage of blood circulation, he had fainted!

After that, he was careful to follow doctors' orders. But it has been said that his death years later was indirectly caused by the agonies he had endured in the making of his first big picture.

MIRACLE MAN was not the only picture in which Lon Chaney suffered tortures beyond imagination in order to create a fantastic, gruesome character. In his greatest rôle, the part for which he will probably always be best known, THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME, Mr. Chaney wore a rubber hump on his back weighing over sixty-five pounds!

Asked why he insisted on wearing such a heavy false hump when it might have been made of some much lighter material, he explained that it also served to weigh his shoulders down. It was the only way in which he could get the effect he was striving for in the creation of this character, and even though it meant strenuous work carrying such a load around on his back all day, he never complained.

The secret of it all was that Lon Chaney was an artist to his fingertips. No make-up was good enough for him if it could be made just a little bit more horrible, more convincing. He would take the script of a picture home with him, study it until he could begin to visualize his part. Then he would dig down into his make-up box; out would come putty for false noses and cheeks; wigs to be torn apart and sewn together again; false teeth to fit over his own perfect teeth, giving him fangs and a badly shaped mouth; and bits of this and that which could be depended upon to cover his eye balls or produce a removable scar.

For hours, days and weeks, he would putter away at his make-up until, when he was satisfied, he would emerge and announce his readiness to start work on the picture.

So here's to Lon Chaney! He pioneered the way for those to come, getting Hollywood and the rest of the world ready for horrors.

It would be easy to go on writing about more of the thousands of interesting and amusing bits of this great actor's career—the ladies who shrieked and fainted when they saw him unmask as THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA—the women's clubs throughout the country who protested against letting children see his pictures—the down-and-out extra who was sick, and whom Lon Chaney missed and sent food and money to.

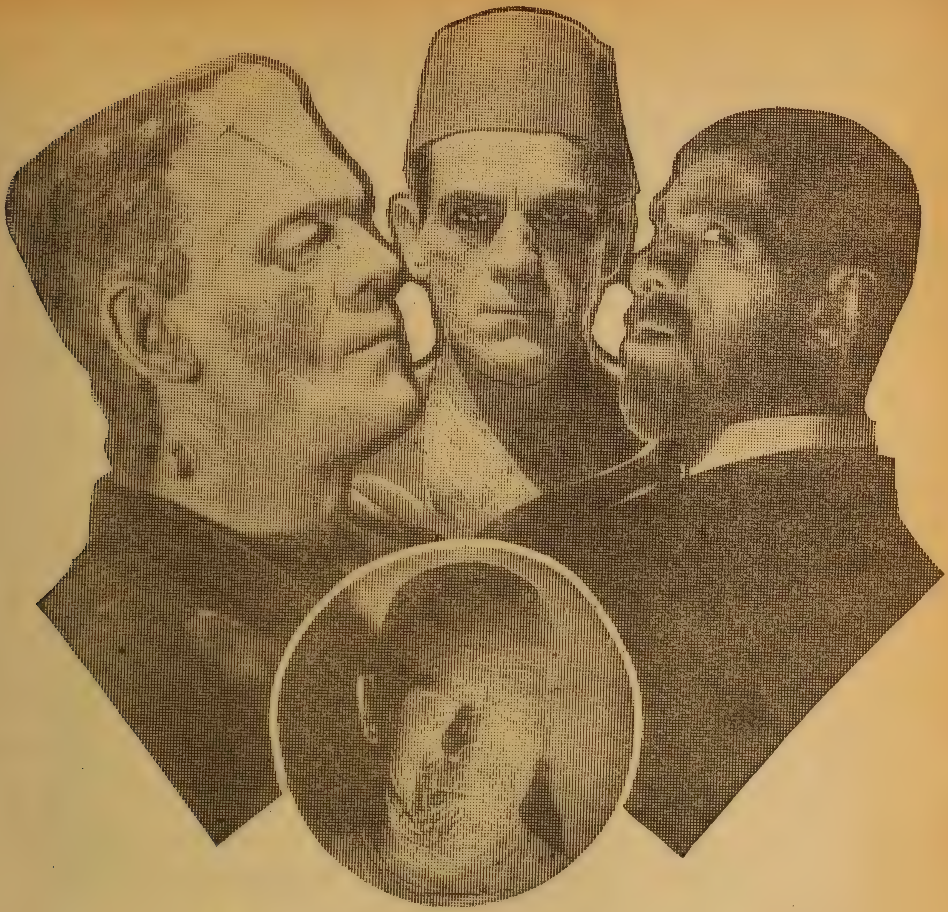
But there are others who are carrying on the traditions founded by him. We really won't know anything about the masters of horror unless we investigate them, too.

THERE is Boris Karloff.

Boris Karloff was just a good "bit" man a few years ago. Then Universal Pictures decided to make the picture which they had been planning for Lon Chaney at the time of his death—FRANKENSTEIN!

By one of the curious quirks of chance which have been responsible for so many new stars, Boris Karloff was chosen for the part of the Monster. In this tall, gaunt-appearing man, James Whale, who was directing the picture, saw something that helped him visualize the character of Frankenstein's man-made monster.

Whale called in Jack Pierce, Universal's head make-up man, and the three of them—Karloff, Whale, and Pierce—went into serious consultation. What could they do to Karloff to make him



Boris Karloff in a few of his chilling make-ups.

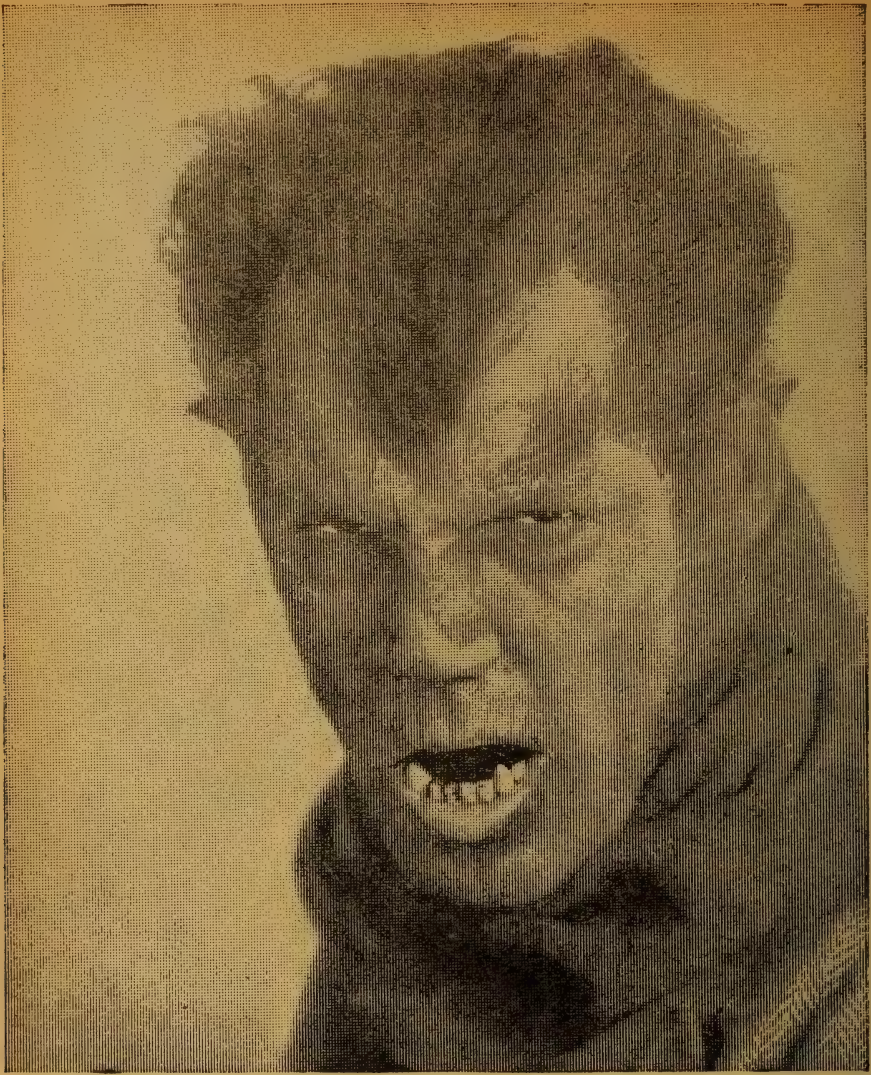
look like he had been created from parts of a hundred corpses?

They ended their consultations several weeks later when the monster was an accomplished thing. They had done everything possible to heighten the effect, even to putting a bolt in his neck, just below the ear, by which his head was supposedly fastened to the rest of his angular body.

Of course, no one actually stuck a bolt a half-inch thick through Karloff's neck. That, together with the rest of the eerie disguise, was accomplished with the proper combination of such things as wax, grease paint, putty, and collodion. But, by the time they were through, Karloff had lost his identity as a man. From that time, forth, he was a monster.

The idea of the make-up was so startling that they decided to keep it as much of a mystery as possible until the picture was ready to play in theaters. Where visitors were ordinarily welcome on the lot, there were now "No Trespassing" signs. Karloff's dressing room, in which he spent almost eight hours a day putting on and taking off his make-up, was heavily guarded. And every one connected with the picture had to promise not to divulge the nature of Karloff's make-up while they were away from the studio.

The same rule of secrecy applied to

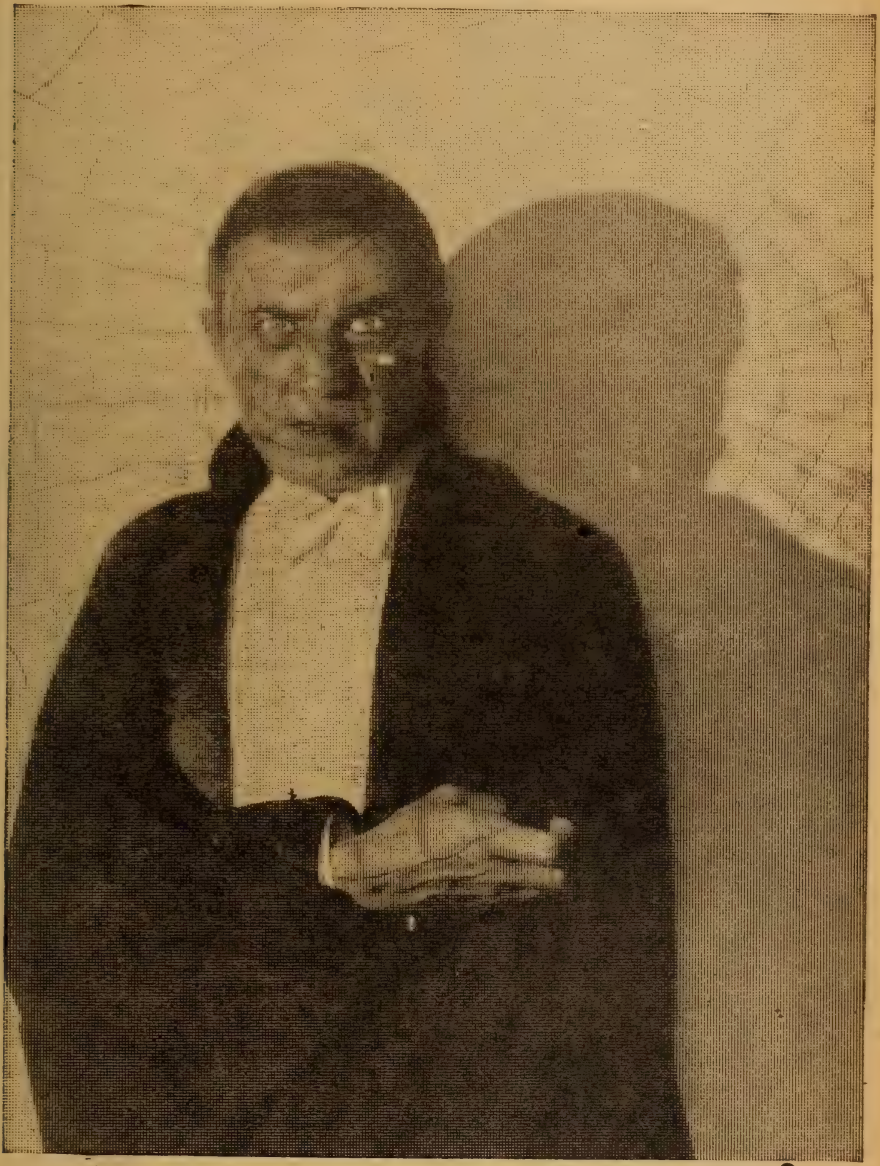


Henry Hull created his own make-up for the "Werewolf of London."

Karloff's latest picture, THE INVISIBLE RAY, in which he plays the part of a scientist, infected by a newly discovered Radium X, who *glows in the dark!* It wasn't until the picture was completed and released that photographs showing this unusual make-up were given out to the newspapers and magazines.

ONCE, when they were preparing to film THE RAVEN, in which both Karloff and Lugosi were starred, they were almost stumped for part of his make-up. The script called for Lugosi to operate on Karloff, purposely disfiguring his face, and causing one of his eyes to remain open but expressionless. They tried all the known tricks, but none of them seemed to give the result that Karloff was after.

In the end, it was Jack Pierce who sent for a man in Hollywood whose specialty was making artificial eyes for blind people. This man—Peyton Lorimer—made up no less than forty-six identical eyes—one for each day that Boris Karloff would be working in the picture. The eyeballs were made of wax and cellophane, and the eye lids of fine silk. They fitted over his eye like tea-cups, and gave the impression—after they had been pasted on and blended into the rest of his make-up with thick grease paint—that he had one enormous eye which never moved nor showed expression. It was a ghastly trick, but one which added to his growing list of horrible achievements.



Sinister Bela Lugosi relies largely on camera and lighting tricks.

Both Fredric March and John Barrymore have played the dual rôles of "Doctor Jekyll and Mister Hyde."

IT isn't often that the movie-going public is treated to the spectacle of a master of horror changing from his natural character into his sinister characterization. That was one of the reasons why Fredric March was so pleased at the opportunity of playing the double rôles of DOCTOR JEKYLL AND MISTER HYDE.

You probably remember that the story is about a brilliant physician whose character and identity change frequently and without warning to those of the murderous brute, Mister Hyde.

Fredric March saw a possibility in this situation which staggered the studio production and make-up men. He wanted to show the actual change on the screen!

Ultimately, they found it possible, but only after a great deal of work. What was necessary was not merely *one* grotesque make-up for Mister March, but *twenty!* Each different make-up was a stage through which he had to pass to change from a normal man to the beast.

The first few of the series of make-ups showed his teeth growing out to become bestial fangs. In the next few, his nose was drawn up and flattened (by the use of putty) so that it would resemble the snout of a gorilla. Next, hair came sprouting out all over his face. Then his skin took on a darker, coarser appearance. And finally, his eyebrows were brought together and his eyes transformed so that they became the beady eyes of a degenerate beast.

Each of the twenty make-ups affected by him took more than three hours to apply. And, except for the final stage showing him completely transformed, there was none of them which showed for more than two or three fleeting seconds in the entire picture!

For his transition from man to beast, March was photographed in close-ups. They took several days to shoot this sequence, working with a camera that was set firmly. It was focused on a chair in which the actor would sit for each shot. On the back of the chair was a small head rest—like the head rest on a dentist's chair, but small enough to be hidden from the camera by March's head when he took his place—which helped to get his head in the proper position for each shot.

When the proper position had been obtained each time, through the combined efforts of the camera crew, the director, the make-up man and March himself, a few feet of film would be made. Then March would go off to his dressing room and prepare the make-up for the next step.

After all the shots had been made, they were blended together, and the result was electrifying enough to send women screaming up the aisles when the picture was first previewed—screaming in horror of the awful transformation which seemed to be happening before their very eyes!

THE horror inspired by Bela Lugosi is horror of a different sort. He does not rely on trick make-ups for his eerie effects, but upon a ghostly, fantastic rôle and unusual lighting.

When he was first drafted for the part of Count Dracula in the first of the films based on vampires, he did considerable research in books which are the best authorities on what a vampire was and how he looked.

A vampire, he discovered, was a person who had died and yet who was not dead—an "undead" person who existed on human blood. And, because a vampire was basically a human being himself, he had no outstanding physical characteristics.

Lugosi set out, then, to make himself look as lifeless as possible. Blue-green powder for his make-up accomplished this. The men handling the lights and camera did the rest.

March (top) and Barrymore (below) as they appeared in their versions of the classic before their transformations.

RESEARCH was responsible, too, for Henry Hull's creation of the fierce and unbelievable monster he played in WEREWOLF OF LONDON. But first, it might be interesting to go into Henry Hull's background.

Henry Hull, along Broadway, was known as a good juvenile actor, which meant that he could portray young men on the stage as well as the best of them. This was not amazing because Henry Hull *was* a young man. But the simple, pleasant rôles he was assigned to each season began to irk him.

"Why," he asked himself, "should I go on playing silly parts like these when I'd rather do more serious things—character rôles?"

He couldn't think of any suitable answer, so he kept his eyes and ears open. Then, one day, he heard that a play called TOBACCO ROAD was about to be produced. He had read the book and knew that the principal part was that of Jeeter Lester, an old simple-minded American peasant. He fought for the part and finally, by the simple expedient of acting his head off, got it.

Then, clad in the most disreputable rags and with a perfect old man make-up, Henry Hull made his bow to Broadway as a character actor. He was an instantaneous success—and so was the show.

But, even before TOBACCO ROAD had settled down to enjoy its long run, Hollywood was after the star of the show. They saw in him another master of horror—another man who might claim Lon Chaney's crown in the field of grotesque make-up.

First they gave him the part of Magwitch in GREAT EXPECTATIONS, in which he played a desperate criminal and then the same man in later years. But his assignment to the rôle of the werewolf was more like what he had wanted.

Digging through over twenty-five books written by eminent scientists, Hull discovered that a werewolf was the result of a real disease—not just the fantastic product of a vivid imagination—and that sufferers acted like and frequently looked like wolves. So he took photographs of himself and began drawing on them in pen and ink to see how much like a wolf he could make himself appear.

When he was satisfied, he took the mutilated photo to the studio make-up department and said, "Here's the way I want to look. Now, fix me up!"

Among the unusual items which went into making the pleasant-looking Henry Hull over into a snarling beast (excepting the regular grease paints and powders) were actual wolf hair, false teeth, absorbent cotton, and fishskin! It took six hours every day to apply these items properly, but he felt it was time well spent.

A NEW type of horror picture is coming to the front these days. It started when Europe discovered that Peter Lorre was a brilliant actor, and the idea since then has rapidly spread all over the movie-going world.

A couple of years ago, he came crashing out of oblivion as the star of a German-made picture simply called "M." In this, he played the rôle of a madman, a baby-killer. Shortly afterward, he was invited to play in an English film, THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH.

In this picture, disguised with only an ugly putty and collodion scar over his right eye, Lorre set a new high mark for sinister performance. Putting his characterization across in short flashes of close-ups, Lorre became evil by implication rather than by deed.

It was not until the end of the picture that you actually saw him at work with death-dealing instruments, although until then, you had been perfectly willing to believe anything of him, so impressed were you by his melancholy and pensive air of impending disaster!

Finishing work on that film, Lorre

came to America to make MAD LOVE and CRIME AND PUNISHMENT. In the first of these two, Lorre was probably the most repulsive-looking individual ever to step before a camera, and his effect was gained not by what he added to his normal appearance, but what he took away.

He shaved all his hair off!

Bald as a hard-boiled egg, Lorre's features took on a new significance. Everything about him was round. His head was a perfect sphere. His face was a perfect moon. His round eyes seemed to pop from his head, and even his mouth seemed to work itself up into a small, tight little circle. It was this roundness that made his characterization so unusual. And it all depended on his being bald.

Discomforts go along with weird make-ups sometimes. While Peter Lorre was bald, he was in constant fear of catching cold. He solved this problem by wearing a stocking cap whenever he was off the set. On the set, on the other hand, he was afraid that the heat from the studio lights would burn his bare scalp, so he was never without a wet chamois skin covering his pate.

BEING a master of horror is a specialized art. There is no school to be attended, and there are no rules that can be laid down by any one.

All you can hope for, if you should ever want to compete with Karloff, Lorre and Company for their laurels, is a lucky break. Without it, you'll never get a chance to show how ghastly you can look, or how sinister you can act.

But, once you've gotten your break, you'll have to pull a new and different rabbit out of your hat every time you are confronted with another problem. You will have to have an imagination second to no one's to be constantly creating various grotesque disguises; because there is one rule that governs them all:

There's nothing so tame as yesterday's bogey-man!

IN THE MARCH

Movie action MAGAZINE

TWO THRILL-CRAMMED WESTERNS——

JOHN WAYNE
in
"THE OREGON TRAIL"

●

BUCK JONES
in
"SUNSET of POWER"

The JUNIOR ADVENTURER'S CORNER

COLUMBIA'S JUNIOR ADVENTURERS CLUB

Old Adventurer Says, "Meet Ted Husing!"

HOWDY, Adventurer!

When I was a youngster, we used to have a saying that was just about the same as, "Here's your hat, what's your hurry?" or, "Skiddoo!" We used to say, "Take the air!"

I just remembered that, because I moseyed into a big theatre just off Times Square in New York City a couple of days ago, and as I looked around, I heard a fellow say, "You take the air in twelve minutes!"

Naturally expecting gun-play to result from such fighting words, I reached for where I'd ordinarily pack leather and whirled around at the same move. But I didn't have any guns on my hips, and the man wasn't talking to me. And the fellow he *was* talking to didn't seem to mind it a bit. He was smiling as pretty as you please, and acting like he enjoyed being insulted like that!

Well, I sashayed over nearer to them—the more you know me, the more you'll discover that Old Adventurer is a pretty nosey old bird!—and listened a little harder. Then I discovered that I wasn't present at any forthcoming battle. I'd just walked into a dress rehearsal of a broadcast. And the fellow that didn't mind being told to take the air—no wonder he didn't mind it! That's his business! It was Ted Husing!

AFTER he'd got finished with his rehearsing, I introduced myself to Ted. "Son," I said to him, "I know thousands and thousands of young fellows and girls—they're all my personal friends—and they'd all admire to hear from your own lips a few things about being a broadcasting man. What have you got to say to them?"

He grinned.

"Honest, Pop," he said, "you don't know what you're asking. I suppose you think that this broadcasting business is something like being a magician or a lion trainer. Why—why—why, gosh, Pop, it's the most ordinary business in the world. The average man that sells furniture in a store gets more thrills than I do!"

You know, the funny part of it was that I could see he really meant it!

"How'd you get into broadcasting?" I asked him, intending to worm something out of him anyhow.

"Me? I was broke, and I heard that they wanted an announcer for a station, so I applied."

"How'd you get the job?"

He grinned again. "I talked longer and louder than any of the other boys that tried out. Honest, Pop, there's nothing exciting up that alley."

I thought I'd try another track. "How come you were broke before you became an announcer. What were you then?"

"Real estate salesman, soap box orator, and aviator. But I was bum at all of them. I lost money when I tried selling lots, nobody listened to me when I tried making speeches, and I cracked up all the planes I ever flew. That's why I was broke," he said.

I pulled out my ticker. "Listen, Son," I said, "I'm a man of few words and short patience. I'm giving you half a minute to make up your mind whether you'll talk about flying or broadcasting. If you don't talk about either, I'll tell my pals that you insulted me, and then——"

"You win, Pop," he cut me off. "Broadcasting ~~it~~ is!"

IT happened back several years ago—that's the way Ted started in telling it—when football broadcasting wasn't such a scientific thing as it is to-day. I had to cover the games all by myself, instead of having Les Quailey around to keep me posted on plays and players.

I'd set up my mike in the best looking location, and trust to luck I could describe the whole game from there.

Well, this one game—I'm not going to tell you what game it was for obvious reasons—I was fooling around, testing out my wires when I noticed a tough looking individual hanging around me. I paid no attention to him—just went on about my business—but this fellow still hung around, watching every move I made. Finally, he came over and asked me if I was the man who was going to broadcast the game. I admitted I was, and it seemed that this stranger had a little proposition to make to me.

He had a pal. Neither he nor this pal of his knew anything about football, but they were pretty good gamblers from Chicago. And so they'd come down from Chicago to this college town to take some money from the students.

Right that minute, the pal was sitting in a pool-room a few blocks away, making bets on a team that I'll call Black College. And my friend, the stranger, made it plain to me that I could make some easy money, myself, if I would arrange to have Black College win.

"But suppose they don't win?" I asked him.

"Who's gonna know?" he said. "All you have to do is to *say* they win. Then we'll pick up the money, split with you, catch a rattler back to Chi, and we'll be out of the way before anybody can find out that we've bilked 'em." He jabbed his elbow in my ribs. "Smart, eh?"

I nodded. "Smart, all right. But I'm not in it, brother!"

My friend from Chicago couldn't understand, at first, that I wasn't interested in making any fake broadcasts for a split of crooked gambling money. But when I finally got it through his skull, he began to get nasty.

"Oh, yeah?" he growled at me. He pulled out the biggest cannon I ever saw and waved it under my nose. "Well, I'm sittin' right here with you, kid, and you're gonna tell the world that Black wins, see?"

Honorary Junior Adventurer
Ted Husing, himself!

WELL, the game started, and I forgot all about my friend. That's one thing about me. When I get to broadcasting a game, I completely lose myself in the game. All I can think of is what's happening on the field down in front of me.

So, as I say, I forgot my friend until Black's opponents made a beautiful pass down the field and ran forty yards for a touch-down. Then I felt his gun poking in my back! I cut my mike dead for long enough to turn around and say, "Don't worry, there's lots of time left yet." Then I went back to broadcasting.

The game dragged on. Before I knew it, we were in the last quarter, with Black still on the losing end of a 6—0 score. I suppose I said something about the game's going into the final moments, because all of a sudden I felt that gun again. My friend leaned forward and whispered in my ear.

"Black wins," was all he said, but I knew he meant it!

I gulped and almost missed a beautiful play! Black, with a great end-run, was galloping down the field!

Now, there was a play I could really be enthusiastic about!

But they were stopped on the eight yard line. A lucky tackle, and Black's touchdown was ruined!

My pal jabbed me in the back again. "You shoulda give that guy a touchdown," he suggested.

I tried to smile. "Lots of time," I murmured. Then I checked and saw that there was less than a minute to play! I wondered whether the shot would be heard by my audience, and whether or not they'd realize that Husing had given his all to the great American listeners.

Then I gripped my heavy, old style microphone and went back to work. There was still forty-odd seconds to play, and Black had the ball, first and touchdown to go, on their opponent's eight-yard line!

They called their signals. The ball was snapped. The quarterback took it and faded back. Two ends and the fullback ran up into the end zone. The quarter poised the ball, threw it. A Black end received it, touched it down, and the score was tied!

I turned to my friend with a sigh of relief as the stands went crazy. See?" I said. "There's plenty of time."

He just looked at me with eyes like icicles. "That just ties it," he said. "Black's gotta win."

"Don't worry. Watch them kick the conversion point."

Even as I said it, down on the field, the timer's gun went off! Officially, the game would be over after Black tried for their point. If they made it, all would be well with Mr. Husing. But if they didn't——

AS they lined up, I felt the cold sweat coming out on my forehead. Somehow, up to then, I hadn't been able to take this sinister looking gent seriously. But now I was wondering how it felt to have a bullet tear through my innards. I was looking around desperately for someone who might have noticed my predicament. I thought of standing up and yelling for a cop. But there was a football game ahead of me, still, and I had to report it!

The ball was snapped back—low. The fullback fumbled it as he put it in place. The guard, brought back from the line to kick looked nervously at the opposing ends who were racing in to smother the kick. He stepped up, swung his foot, and kicked desperately! And the kick was—*no good!*

SUDDENLY I had a hunch. I whirled to my pal. "Tie score!" I exclaimed. "They'll play another period. Black'll win then!"

He looked incredulous. "Honest?" he asked. And then I knew my hunch was good—that he knew nothing about football—that he had swallowed my lie about the extra period!

"Honest," I assured him. I snapped back to my mike and spoke faster than Floyd Gibbons ever did.

JUNIOR ADVENTURERS CLUB
JUNIOR ADVENTURERS CLUB

The harmonica band which played for the first meeting of our squadron in Irvington, N. J. No wonder they've got over a thousand members!

"Folks," I said, "it's a tie-score, 6—6, and the game's over!"

I cut my mike dead, threw it square in the tough guy's face as hard as I could! Then I ran like the devil, without waiting to see what happened—whether I knocked him out or not.

"WHAT *did* happen," I asked him.

Ted Husing grinned again. "I don't know, Pop. Except that, when the engineer came to collect the equipment after the game, he found a busted mike. How it came to be busted was more than he could figure out. There wasn't a soul around by then!"

And that's the true adventure story from Honorary Adventurer Ted Husing—the man who says he can't see anything exciting or thrilling about his experience as a broadcaster.

I knew you'd want to know, so I asked Ted a few questions about this broadcasting business. He's got a few general rules that he says will help anyone who wants to handle a microphone.

First is, learn to talk correctly. Don't talk too fast, pronounce all the letters in every word, don't forget your g's and t's on the ends of words, and don't slur.

Second, practice talking naturally, without getting a stuck-up, stilted tone. Get by yourself in a room and read aloud, or carry on an imaginary conversation with some one else. Get so you can speak as naturally without anybody to answer you back as you can when you're out with your friends.

And third, live a clean life. Broadcasting is a strenuous business, especially when it comes to sports announcing and such. You have to be up on your toes all the time, ready for everything. You can't have a mind fogged by dissipation and expect it to rise to emergencies.

NOW, here's a letter from Junior Adventurer Edward Casey in New York City. Out where he sees more sky-scrapers than he does tall timber, Eddie wants to know "Is the West still like it used to be?"

My answer to Eddie—Yes and no.

If you mean, Son, is the desert still hot in the blistering sun, and cool in the light of the moon; if you mean, do the coyotes still howl, do brave men still stand guard over their property, and are broncs still wild, there's only one answer. That is, "Yes."

But certain things have changed, and nobody can deny it. They've changed because men are always thinking of new things to do, and new ways to do them. Time was when a man who ranched would throw his duffel bag into a wagon, kiss his wife good-bye, and start out for the nearest town on business, to be gone several days—maybe even a week.

Nowadays, he's more apt to hop into his car—sometimes a moth-eaten old specimen, but more usually a shiny new one—and speed into town and back again the same afternoon. Or, if he doesn't want to take even half a day from his work, he can lift up his telephone receiver and "be in town" in a few seconds.

They still tell stories about miners, prospectors, and far-flung ranchers who

COLUMBIA'S JUNIOR ADVENTURERS CLUB

Movie Action Magazine Squadron, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I hereby apply for membership in Columbia's JUNIOR ADVENTURERS CLUB, and agree to obey all RULES AND REGULATIONS, and PLEDGE myself to keep the CLUB LAWS, which are as follows:

1. I must be Courageous and Honest.
2. Loyal to Every Test.
3. Helpful to the Stranger.
4. Friendly to All.
5. Courteous to All.
6. Kind to All.
7. Obedient to Parents and Teachers.
8. Cheerful in Work and Play.
9. Thrifty in All Things.
10. Brave in the Right.
11. Clean in Thought, in Speech and Deed.
12. Reverent to Our Maker.

Name .... Age .... Grade ....

Street .... Birthday ....

City .... School ....

Favorite Local Theater..

Sponsored by Old Adventurer

never knew about the Civil War until after it was all over. But now there's hardly a ranch house, I don't care how far it is from any place, without a radio going full blast! As soon as there's any news to be had, they have it!

Even crime has changed, out past the crowded cities. Horse stealing used to be a serious thing, because a man who stole another man's horse was taking away his very life. A man without a horse in those days couldn't get any place. If he couldn't go places, he couldn't make his living. And so horse thieves were strung up wherever they were caught. To-day, a horse thief is a rare bird because, even if he *did* steal a man's horse—which wouldn't be so serious—he'd not be able to get much for it.

Rustling has changed, too. Rustlers found that they could be caught too easily by posses in automobiles who could swoop down on them while they were trying to drive off slow-moving cattle. So nowadays, if a man's a rustler, he works with a truck. He locates a few scattered head of stock, kills and skins them on the spot, loads them into his truck, and lights out as fast as he can for the nearest crooked meat dealer he knows. This practice has gotten so bad lately, incidentally, that several states have made it a criminal offense for wholesale butchers to buy skinned beeves without their hides, so that the brands can be registered on the bills of sale and the real original ownership of the cattle established. This has added to the risks of rustling, even modern style, and has cut down ranchers' losses considerably.

I'M glad you wrote in, Eddie. If there's any more you want to know, write again. And if any of you other adventurers have questions, shoot 'em in to Old Adventurer. They'll get answered some way or other!

SOME pictures came in from a whole flock of Junior Adventurers who held their first meeting at the Castle Theatre in Irvington, New Jersey. Who but our old friend, Honorary Adventurer Casey Jones, turned out to help them make their first meeting a huge success!

I see they've got a harmonica band out there, too, to liven up the meetings every once in a while. What about *your* club? Have you got any pictures? Any band or team or orchestra? Drop a line to Old Adventurer and say so, and I'll pass the word along.

AND, while we're talking about clubs, I've got something more to say. Instead of clipping out just the one coupon on Page 122, and sending it in for yourself if you'd like to join the Junior Adventurers Club, why don't you send in a lot of them—you, and all your friends? Then you won't be alone in your town.

You do that. You round up your club in advance, then all send in your applications at the same time, and you'll be able to have some group activities. And what you don't know about electing your officers, just ask us. We'll tell you!

You really ought to have your squadron ready and going in a hurry. Spring's coming on fast, now. Baseball, marble shooting, camping—you'll want to compete with the other clubs in your neighborhood. Be the leader of the Junior Adventurers team in your town!

WELL, I'll be getting on, now. It's time, already, to start thinking about our next visit with an Honorary Adventurer—and another true adventure story from him. Wonder who it'll be?

Old Adventurer

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 93

ESCAPE FROM DEVIL'S ISLAND

A Columbia picture, with Victor Jory, Florence Rice, and Norman Foster.

Norman Foster is sentenced to Devil's Island for a crime of which he is innocent. Victor Jory is a spy who becomes a guard in order to liberate a fellow spy, also a prisoner there. The high spots of the picture are the struggles of the three men to escape from their hell-hole and reach civilization.

VICTOR JORY IS COMING UP FAST AS ONE OF THE SCREEN'S BETTER STRONG AND SILENT HEROES. THIS PICTURE HELPS HIM ALONG.

AND DON'T FORGET . . .

These were and still are favorites of ours.

MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY—An all time high for gripping sea stories. Gable and Laughton excel!

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM—Shakespeare's fantasy becomes everyone's happy entertainment.

IF YOU COULD ONLY COOK—A corking comedy with Jean Arthur in the lead.

BARBARY COAST—San Francisco in its rowdy days, with Edward G. Robinson as the tough faro man.

EAST OF JAVA—A lion almost killed Bickford in making this one.

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA—The maddest movie ever made, with the Marx Brothers running wild.

CAPTAIN BLOOD—Sabatini's colorful story done up properly by the new star, Errol Flynn.

A TALE OF TWO CITIES—Really magnificent entertainment, wrapped around the French Revolution!

HANDS ACROSS THE TABLE—Boisterous comedy with the queen of high class slapstick—Carole Lombard.

ANNIE OAKLEY—A great story built around Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. It's a rodeo in itself!

CAMERA THRILLS—It only runs a few minutes, but it has the most powerful punches ever recorded by cameras!

FRISCO KID—Jimmy Cagney's back with a two-fisted saga of the evil days of San Francisco.

THE GREAT IMPERSONATION—Two men are perfect doubles. One is a spy, the enemy of the other's country.

IN PERSON—Ginger Rogers pokes fun at her sister stars, with happy results.

THE NEW FRONTIER—A swell John Wayne Western!

PANIC ON THE AIR—Radio hi-jackers get after Lloyd Nolan.

ONE WAY TICKET—An authentic prison story, written by a prison guard's daughter. Walter Connolly's in it.

RENDEZVOUS—William Powell captures the enemy spies and gaily wins the war by himself.

GRAND EXIT—A different detective story, with Edmund Lowe trying to find a dangerous pyromaniac.

Movie action MAGAZINE

CRASHES THRU!

Announcing two novels
COMPLETE and FULL-LENGTH

based on the

CLYDE BEATTY ● MANUEL KING

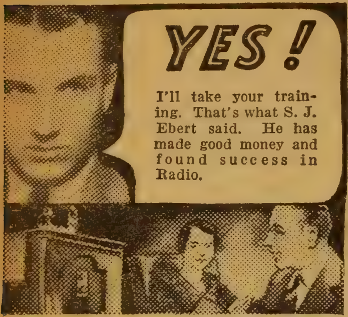
serial

"DARKEST AFRICA"

The first of these novels will appear in the MARCH ISSUE. The second will appear in an early issue.

AND STILL MORE MARCH STARS . . . .
JACKIE COOPER . . .
PRESTON FOSTER . . . .
RALPH BELLAMY . . . . .
in their latest movies!

Read what happened to these two men when I said:


YES!
I'll take your training. That's what S. J. Ebert said. He has made good money and found success in Radio.

NO!
I'm not interested. That's what this fellow said. Today he would be ashamed if I gave you his real name.

I will Train You at Home in Spare Time for a GOOD JOB IN RADIO

These two fellows had the same chance. They each clipped and sent me a coupon, like the one in this ad. They got my book on Radio's opportunities.

S. J. Ebert, 104-B Quadrangle, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, saw that Radio offered him a real chance. He enrolled. The other fellow, whom we will call John Doe, wrote that he wasn't interested. He was just one of those fellows who wants a better job and better pay, but never does anything about it. One of the many who spend their lives in a low-pay, no-future job, because they haven't the ambition, the determination, the action it takes to succeed.

But read what S. J. Ebert wrote me and remember that John Doe had the same chance: "Upon graduation I accepted a job as serviceman, and within three weeks was made Service Manager. This job paid me $40 to $50 a week compared with $18 I earned in a shoe factory before. Eight months later I went with Station KWCR as operator. From there I went to KTNT. Now I am Radio Engineer with WSUI. I certainly recommend the N.R.I. to all interested in the greatest field of all, Radio."

Get ready for Jobs like these. Many Radio Experts make $30, $50, $75 a week

Spare time and full time set servicing: installing, operating, maintaining broadcast, aviation, commercial, police, ship and television stations. Opportunities with Radio dealers and jobbers. A service shop or retail Radio business of your own. I'll train you for these and other good jobs in connection with the manufacture, sale and service of Radio sending and receiving sets, auto Radios, loud speaker systems, short wave sets, etc.

"I want to help you. If you are earning less than $35 a week I believe I can raise your pay. However, I will let you decide that. Let me show you what I have done for others, what I am prepared to do for you. Get my book, read it over, and decide one way or another." *J. E. Smith,*

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Hold your job. I'll train you quickly and inexpensively right at home in your spare time to be a Radio Expert. You don't need a high school or college education. My 50-50 method of training—half with lessons, half with Radio equipment—gives you broad practical experience—makes learning at home easy, fascinating, practical. I will agree in writing to refund your money if you are not satisfied with my Lesson and Instruction Service when you graduate.

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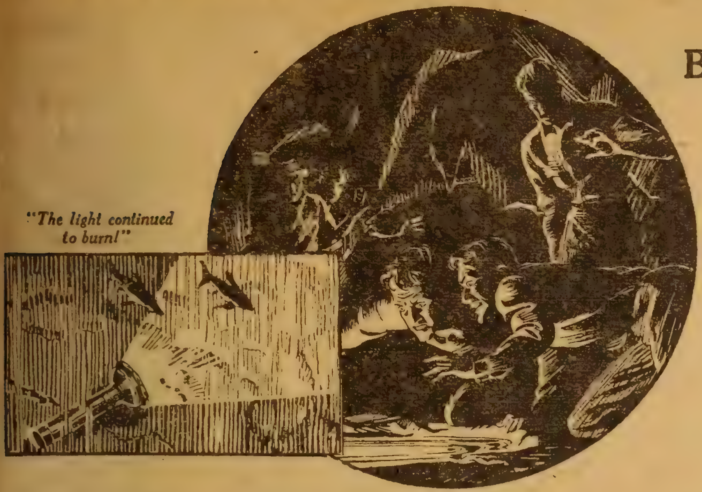
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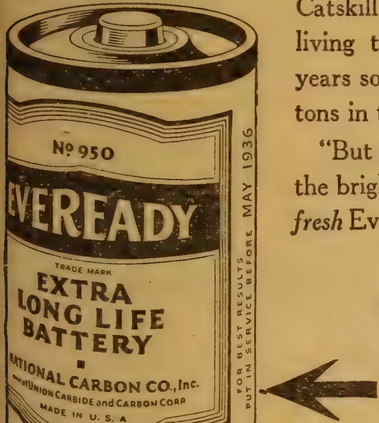
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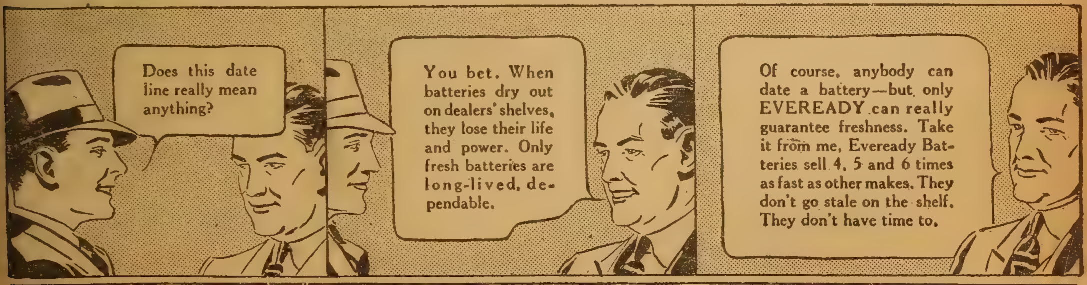
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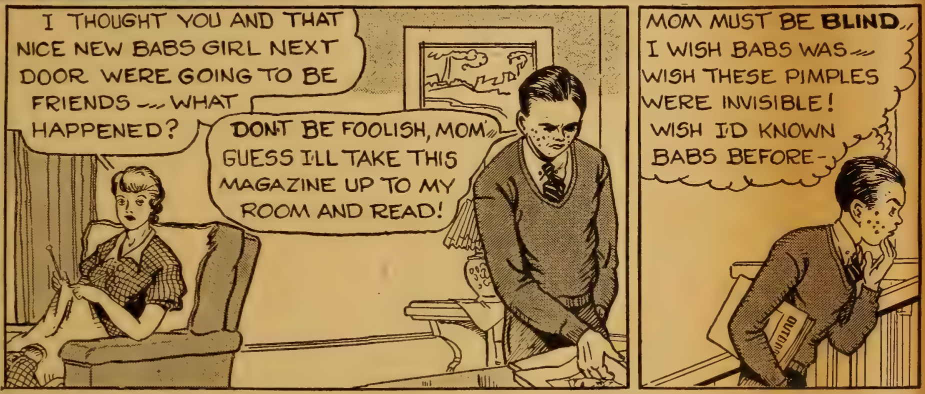
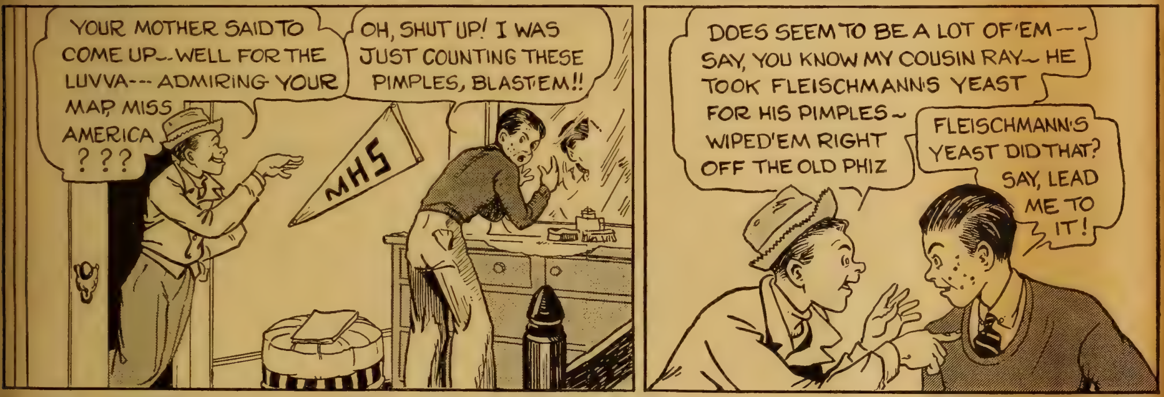
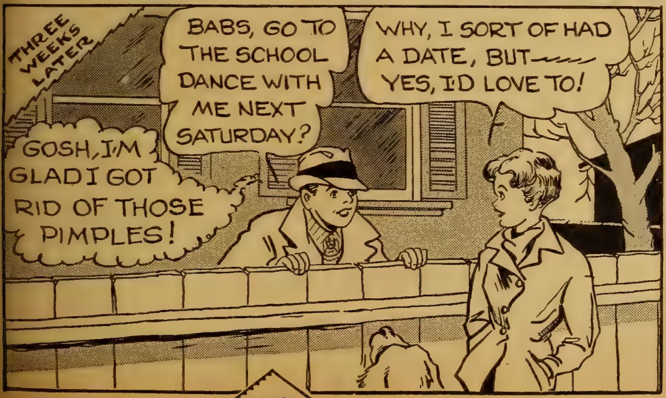
"THE FIRST GIRL I EVER LIKED — and these Pimples had to come!"

But it wasn't too late, Ben found, to mend the trouble


I THOUGHT YOU AND THAT NICE NEW BABS GIRL NEXT DOOR WERE GOING TO BE FRIENDS — WHAT HAPPENED?
DON'T BE FOOLISH, MOM. GUESS I'LL TAKE THIS MAGAZINE UP TO MY ROOM AND READ!
MOM MUST BE BLIND, I WISH BABS WAS — WISH THESE PIMPLES WERE INVISIBLE! WISH I'D KNOWN BABS BEFORE —


YOUR MOTHER SAID TO COME UP — WELL FOR THE LUVVA — ADMIRING YOUR MAP, MISS AMERICA???
OH, SHUT UP! I WAS JUST COUNTING THESE PIMPLES, BLAST 'EM!!
MHS
DOES SEEM TO BE A LOT OF 'EM — SAY, YOU KNOW MY COUSIN RAY — HE TOOK FLEISCHMANN'S YEAST FOR HIS PIMPLES — WIPED 'EM RIGHT OFF THE OLD PHIZ
FLEISCHMANN'S YEAST DID THAT? SAY, LEAD ME TO IT!


THREE WEEKS LATER
BABS, GO TO THE SCHOOL DANCE WITH ME NEXT SATURDAY?
WHY, I SORT OF HAD A DATE, BUT — YES, I'D LOVE TO!
GOSH, I'M GLAD I GOT RID OF THOSE PIMPLES!

Don't let adolescent pimples make YOU hide away!

Between the ages 13 and 25, important glands develop. This causes disturbances throughout the body. Waste poisons in the blood irritate the skin, causing pimples.

In treating adolescent pimples, doctors prescribe Fleischmann's Yeast. This fresh yeast clears the blood of skin irritants that cause pimples. Then the pimples disappear. Eat Fleischmann's Yeast 3 times a day, before meals, until skin clears.

Supplies Vitamins A B D G
FLEISCHMANN'S YEAST
Eat 3 cakes daily before meals

— clears the skin

by clearing skin irritants out of the blood

"GET A LIFT WITH A CAMEL"

THE TOWERS OF MANHATTAN from a new angle—New York's new Triborough Bridge. In the foreground: Howard Hougland, wearing the picturesque engineers' "hard hat." "An engineer's life is packed with action," he says. "When my pep is at low ebb, there is nothing like a Camel. I always get a 'lift' with a Camel. I also prefer Camel's good taste."

WINTER SPORTS TAKE ENERGY TOO. Says Margaret Lynam (*left*): "When I feel exhausted from a long day outdoors, Camels renew my flow of energy."

"I AM A STEEL WORKER on the Triborough Bridge," says Ben Parsons (*above*). "When tired, I get a 'lift' with a Camel."

•

TUNE IN! Camel Caravan with Walter O'Keefe, Deane Janis, Ted Husing, Glen Gray and the Casa Loma Orchestra. Tuesday and Thursday—9 p. m. E. S. T., 8 p. m. C. S. T., 9:30 p. m. M. S. T., 8:30 p. m. P. S. T.—over WABC-Columbia Network.

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MARCH
1936

Movie action
MAGAZINE

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DARKEST AFRICA"
YDE BEATTY
FIGHTING DRAMA
SNARLING BEASTS
AND
ONSTER BAT-MEN

PY 77
A WEB OF
RIGUE AND
REACHERY

LEVEN BIG
FEATURES

COLDS are dangerous infections-*give them Antiseptic Treatment!*

Listerine's success in reducing the number of colds is due to germ-killing action in mouth and throat

Colds are infections. Why not treat them as such—not with harsh drugs powerless against bacteria, but with a first-rate antiseptic that kills germs quickly?

Fewer, milder colds

People who follow this system may expect fewer colds and fewer sore throats. That has been proved over and over again by scientific tests in which Listerine was used.

The results of these tests begun in 1930 are corroborated by the experience of Listerine users as attested by enthusiastic letters to this company.

Remember, your cold is accompanied by germs, which invade the body through the mouth and throat. Promptly killed or even held in check, they may do no damage. Allowed to multiply, these bacteria are almost certain to get the upper hand. A mean cold or a nasty sore throat often follows.

Kills germs on membranes

Listerine holds such germs in check. When this pleasant though powerful antiseptic touches the mucous membranes, it begins to kill by the millions, germs associated with colds and sore throat.

Even 3 hours after its use, vulnerable areas show a substantially reduced bacterial count.

See for yourself

Why not get in the habit of using Listerine twice a day this winter? You may find, as many others have, that it makes you less susceptible to winter ailments. Many report that as a result of using Listerine they have no colds whatsoever. Others say they catch cold seldom, and that their colds are so mild as to cause no inconvenience. Lambert Pharmacal Co., St. Louis, Mo.

Listerine

–at the first sign of Cold or Sore Throat

On Sale Third Wednesday Of Each Month

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, $1.00

Movie action MAGAZINE

SINGLE COPIES, 10 CENTS

JOHN L. NANOVIC, Editor.

ROBERT SIDMAN, Associate Editor.

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Volume 1 March, 1936 Number 5

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What you'll like—and why.

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We predict that . . .

"The Leathernecks Have Landed"

WILL BE THE MOST EXCITING PICTURE

IN 1936!

READ THE WHOLE STORY, COMPLETE IN

Movie action MAGAZINE

NEXT MONTH

The Movie Round-up

MODERN TIMES

A United Artists picture, with Charlie Chaplin, Paulette Goddard, Chester Conklin, and Henry Bergman.

A new Chaplin picture is an event in any language. "Modern Times" is no exception, following in the footsteps of such illustrious predecessors as "City Lights," "The Gold Rush," and all the way back to "The Kid," "Shoulder Arms," and "Easy Street." You'll laugh with a lump in your throat at "Modern Times," the best of them all.

ONE OF THE GREATEST PICTURES YOU WILL SEE ALL YEAR LONG.

CEILING ZERO

A Warner Brothers picture, with James Cagney, Pat O'Brien, Stuart Erwin, Barton MacLane, and June Travis.

It's a sickening thing to watch a pal of yours go streaking across the field, a crazy, blazing torch of doom, to tear through the wall of a steel hangar and die! And to stay until the last fatal instant with another of the gang (who cares if he's been a rat? He's squaring himself with the world now, isn't he?) while he spins madly down through the storm-filled night to his death! It's only when the lights go up and you realize that you have been sitting in a comfortable theater while it all happened on the screen, that you are able to breathe normally again and say, "That's the greatest aviation picture I've ever seen!"

WITHOUT RESERVATION, "CEILING ZERO" IS THE MOST GRIPPING AERIAL FILM EVER MADE—A PICTURE YOU MUST SEE!

OPERA HAT (Tentative title.)

A Columbia picture, with Gary Cooper, Jean Arthur, Lionel Stander, and Douglass Dumbrille.

Not so long ago, a bright-eyed Italian named Frank Capra set Hollywood and the rest of the world on end when he directed a picture called "Lady for a Day." They said he couldn't repeat, and he gave them, "It Happened One Night." Then, when he followed up with "Broadway Bill," everyone at last understood that he made only the best pictures—no duds. They were on pins and needles to see his next one, and now here it is—"Opera Hat"—the story of a small-town boy who finds himself running a Metropolitan Opera Company in New York City. Gary Cooper is a better comedian than you ever suspected, but that's no surprise to Capra; he knew it all along.

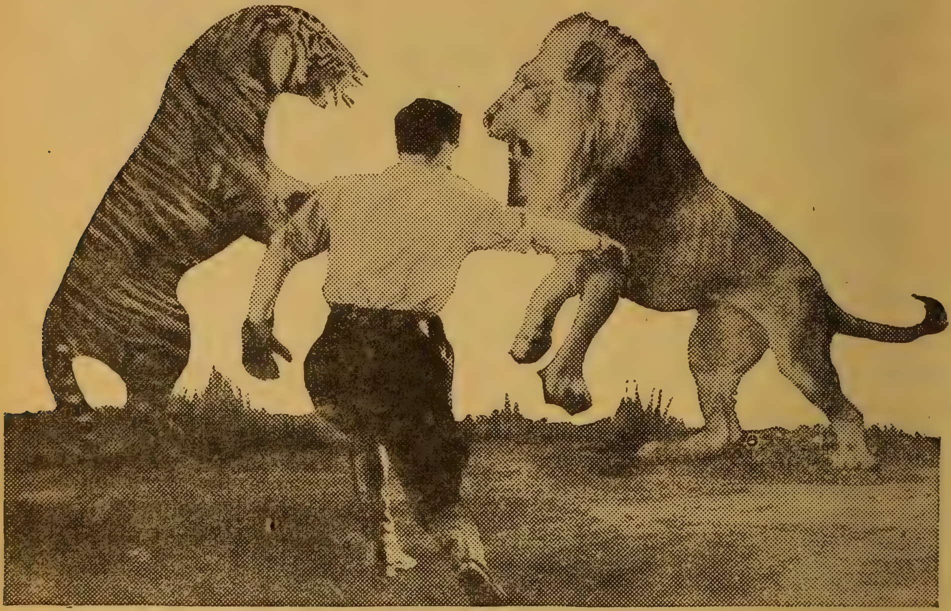
A GRAND COMEDY, HUMAN AND REAL, A REAL SUCCESSOR TO A LONG LINE OF FRANK CAPRA CROWNS.

Continued on page 53

A THRILLING, COMPLETE NOVEL

based on

CLYDE BEATTY'S



DARKEST AFRICA

The mysteries of the Dark Continent form a background for this smashing story featuring the world-famous wild animal trainers—Manuel King and Clyde Beatty!

"LOOK—Cymba!" yelled Nagga, the native boy, in warning to his master, Clyde Beatty.

Clyde, the animal trainer, had just entered the arena in his animal compound at B'wanta on the west coast of Africa to work a recently captured tiger into submission. Nagga had accidentally confused the operations of the ropes controlling the door to the lion's cage leading into the arena. The pulleys had snarled leaving the passageway open for the king of beasts!

The compound was rent with the liberated lion's tremendous roar. The tiger answered by a sharp hissing as though a dozen steam valves had been opened. And between the mighty lord of the jungle, pawing at the portal of the cage, and the menacing tiger cat stood the defenseless Beatty!

There was no time to be lost. The white man whirled toward the safety gate, calling out, "Quick! Give me the gun!"

His words acted like a starting gun for the two animals. They suddenly hurled themselves at each other with all the ferocity of their primitive natures! The arena suddenly became a mass of flying claws, bared fangs, and menacing bodies as lion and tiger viciously tore at each other!

Beatty reached the safety gate. Crossing to a small table, he picked up the gun. He would have dashed back into the arena, but restraining hands held him fast.

Driscoll and Tomlin, the circus men who had come from New York to acquire some of his wild stock for their big show, had reached out and seized him.

"You can't go back in there, it's suicide!" said Driscoll desperately.

And well it might have been. Before their eyes was a death struggle between the two supreme natural enemies of the jungle!

The tiger had sunk his teeth into the lion's flank and was shaking it with a fierce, maniacal vigor. The king of beasts heaved mightily to gain the upper hand and ripped away at the striped body with gigantic paws. Over and over they rolled on the floor of the cage. The air was pierced with the unearthly noises of jungle warfare.

Beatty struggled in the grip of his friends. His eyes were riveted on the fighting animals.

"I've got to stop them before they kill each other!" he said through clenched teeth.

Suddenly hurling the other men off balance, he broke free. He reached the safety gate, entered it quickly, and slammed it shut behind him. His action came with such quickness that both Tomlin and Driscoll were powerless to stop him. There was nothing to be done but look on helplessly.

"LOOK out! They'll kill you!" Driscoll cried instinctively as Beatty came dangerously close to the animals. The fight had taken a sudden turn. They came clawing toward him.

Beatty began firing his gun, sometimes in the air, sometimes straight at the man-killers. *Snap!* went his whip across their muzzles, making them wince in pain. Then the fight went on again as grimly as ever!

The animal trainer approached them from another direction. He got so close that he could touch them! Clyde seized the lion by the mane, only to be sent sprawling to the side of the cage by a big paw that darted out from nowhere!

Clyde was back on his feet in an instant. Again he tugged at the two ani-

THE CAST

CLYDE BEATTY	Clyde
MANUEL KING	Baru
ELAINE SHEPARD	Valerie
Lucien Prival	Dagna
Wheeler Oakman	Durkin
Edmund Cobb	Craddock

Directed by B. R. Eason and Joseph Kane
Story and screenplay by John Rathmell, Tracy Knight,
Barney Sarecky and Ted Parsons

A fictionization of the Republic serial of the same title.

mals with his bare hands! He fired his gun within arm's length of the two beasts. Momentarily startled, they lessened their holds on one another.

Quick as a flash, Beatty snapped his whip across the muzzle of the tiger. A roar of rage broke through the arena. Clyde got alongside the lion, jabbed his whip-handle deep in the animal's flanks. With a threatening growl the animal went slinking toward the entrance to the chute. Beatty chased him out through the portal and slammed the gate shut behind him.

Now he was alone in the arena with the tiger! The striped cat eyed its tormentor with a murderous glint in its eye. The whizzing whip and the sharp commands of this strange enemy quickly caused the beast to change its tactics. It became as docile as a kitten, rolled over as though full of play.

The tiger was completely under Beatty's spell. Clyde crowded it toward its cage. There, for an instant, it hesitated and wheeled around as though to pounce. Clyde fired his gun and, in the confusion that followed, boldly kicked the jungle cat through the door and locked it up!

DRISCOLL and Tomlin were amazed.

"I didn't think you would ever get out of that alive!" said Driscoll.

"It's all in the day's work, gentlemen," he answered modestly.

"You know, a day's work like that with our circus in America would make you one of the biggest attractions in the country," Driscoll observed.

"Yes, why not come back with us? We will pay you more for one season's work, than you'll make out here in ten years," supplemented Tomlin.

"Thanks, gentlemen, but I'm afraid there isn't enough money in the world to lure me away from Africa," Clyde answered.

As the men discussed the proposition, they strolled down the narrow main street of the village where Clyde made his headquarters. There were small native huts strewn about the place like so many ant hills. Two or three natives were gathered in close conversation in front of one small dwelling, among them being Ham-bone, a friendly native who assisted Clyde in the compound.

A black came racing out of nowhere, breathless and excited, screaming in his native tongue. His message sent Beatty's faithful porters scurrying toward the trainer. A lion had been caught in one of his traps!

Clyde snapped sharp orders: "Get the safari started! We'll bring him in at once!"

"I done told 'em to, Boss, and they're ready for you right now," Ham-bone announced proudly.

"Nice work, Ham-bone, nice work," exclaimed Clyde, as he hurried inside his dwelling to get the paraphernalia necessary for the journey.

Driscoll and Tomlin soon saw the safari on its way, forming a long procession along the main street of the village. Natives came rushing in with their equipment to take their places in line.

The safari wended its way along the jungle trails with Clyde leading the way. Through thick underbrush, open clearings, into dense forests they marched at a steady pace, toward the lion trap.

OFF in the middle of the jungle, within view of the trapped beast, the leaves of a large tree rustled and the strange head and body of a huge ape were revealed. Beside him was a young white boy, perched apelike on the limbs of the tree. Both were gazing intently toward the captive jungle king.

The boy was Baru. He had made his home in the jungles and the veldt ever since he escaped from Joba, the land of the Bat-men. Bonga—the ape—was his companion and his protector. The two were inseparable. Theirs was the call of the wild.

They swung through the branches of

Beside him was a young white boy, perched apelike on the limbs.

the trees with great dexterity. Up, up, up to the treetop they climbed. Off in the distance came Clyde and his safari. The boy and the ape scrambled down through the branches to the ground and disappeared.

When Clyde and his men reached the camouflaged cage, where the lion had been trapped, the ranks broke in confusion. The men mumbled uneasily in a strange jargon. Clyde grew red with rage. The animal had vanished!

What happened? What evil enemy had done this? Upon closer investigation, Clyde noticed tracks near the cage. Bending close to the ground he saw fresh human footprints alongside the trap!

Clyde was furious. He barked out a command and the procession set out again toward the interior of the wild country. Clyde suspected the white traders, Durkin and Craddock, who lived in a near-by village. He wanted a show-down!

From their place of concealment, high up in the trees, Baru and Bongo saw Clyde and his men pass by underneath. Baru motioned to the ape to stay where he was. He, himself, started swinging along through the trees in the wake of the safari.

The safari came within sight of the trading village where Durkin and Craddock lived. As they proceeded down the principal street, a few curious natives ran out to watch them.

Durkin and Craddock stretched out lazily on their cots, inside their primitive hut. They were dressed for the jungle with their sun helmets, white shirts and breeches greyed with dirt and massive hiking shoes.

They were disgusted with the bad breaks they had been having lately, and how difficult it was for them to get business. The ivory they had smuggled out didn't even pay for their liquor, and they were wondering whether their native trader might be cheating them.

They were surprised as they heard the approaching safari. The novelty of it brought them to their door where they saw Clyde grimly leading the party.

"It's that animal guy. I wonder what he wants?" growled Durkin.

"He's heading straight for here. Guess he wants to see us," Craddock replied.

Within a few yards of the traders, Clyde halted his procession, allowing the men to fall out, while he headed for Durkin's hut.

"Catch any lions lately?" Durkin asked him.

"There was one in my trap this morning, but it was gone when we got there," Clyde said pointedly.

"How did that happen?"

"That's what I came out here to find out!" was the answer.

AS they spoke, a native woman came out from one of the huts and placed a basket containing her child in the center of the village square. She returned to the hut, disappearing inside.

Not twenty yards away, screened by the thick underbrush which fringed the village, a lion watched with interest the activity in the village. The huge beast's attention finally focused on the basket which the woman had left unguarded. Suddenly it bounded forth and headed straight for the basket!

The sudden appearance of the beast in the peaceful village street threw the natives into a mad, screaming panic. Instantly, the street was deserted, save for the curious lion and the squalling baby. Shrieking from her doorway, the mother tried to rush out to her baby's rescue, but the frantic hands of other native women restrained her!

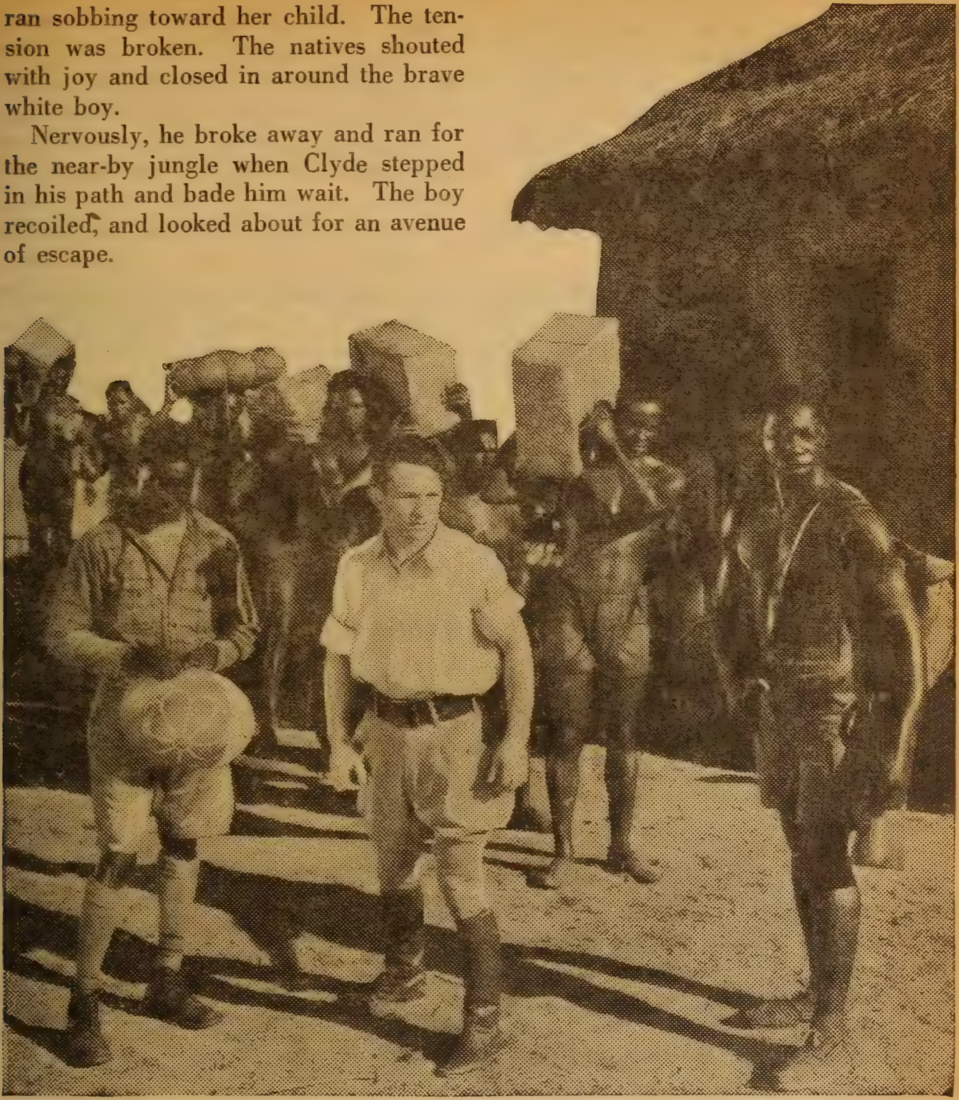
Durkin and Craddock were frozen by the scene. Clyde looked on with interest, but without great anxiety. He knew that if the lion was not frightened by sudden attack, he would probably bound back into the jungle without harming the infant. But if any one would be foolish enough to arouse the mighty beast——

And then Durkin was beside him, a heavy express rifle in his hands, leveling it at the lion! At the same moment, a small, stocky white boy dropped from the skies, it seemed, and was dashing fearlessly at the beast, brandishing a puny stick.

"Don't shoot!" Clyde shouted, knocking Durkin's rifle aside. "You may hit the boy!"

Momentarily, the lion was puzzled. The white boy came on, shouting strange sounds. The lion growled angrily, roared, then turned and fled back into the jungle with an angry snarl! The native woman let out a scream of joy and ran sobbing toward her child. The tension was broken. The natives shouted with joy and closed in around the brave white boy.

Nervously, he broke away and ran for the near-by jungle when Clyde stepped in his path and bade him wait. The boy recoiled and looked about for an avenue of escape.



They saw Clyde grimly leading the safari to their door.

"Don't be afraid—we won't hurt you. Who are you?" asked Clyde.

"I am Baru," he answered, eying the white strangers suspiciously.

"Where did you learn to handle lions like that?" inquired Clyde.

Baru told him he lived in the jungle all his life. The animals were his friends. He spoke a clear English though with an odd accent.

"I have had to hide in the jungle," he continued. "I was living in Joba, the hidden city beyond the Mountains of Despair. My sister and I were prisoners of Dagna, the High Priest. He gave us a teacher who taught us many things. He told us how to speak the white man's tongue, too. But we were unhappy. I escaped but my sister is still there."

In the midst of this conversation, Durkin let out a sudden oath. Again he raised his rifle and was about to shoot! In a quick glance, Baru saw his target and seized the gun barrel, crying:

"Don't shoot! That's Bonga! He helped me escape from Joba. We've been living in the jungle together. We're trying to find some way in which to free my sister."

Clyde was puzzled. "Why are they keeping your sister a prisoner in Joba?"

"The High Priest tells the people my sister is a Goddess. They guard her day and night, but I told her I would find somebody to rescue her."

"Do you think you could find your way back there?" inquired Clyde.

Baru smiled. The jungle was home to him. Joba was just beyond the mountains in the Valley of Lost Souls, through the Gorge of No Returns. Clyde reached his decision suddenly.

"I shall help you, Baru! I'll call my safari together and we'll start right out!"

The young boy looked at his new friend closely. He was pleased. He liked this frank white man and his brusque manner.

AS Clyde walked through the native ranks preparing for the new journey, Durkin and Craddock made a discovery which was destined to change the lives of all of them. They saw a glistening object on Baru's arm!

They looked at each other knowingly. Durkin asked with feigned casualness, "Where did you get that green diamond, son?"

"This is one of the sacred stones of Joba," exclaimed Baru. "There are many of them in the Temple."

The boy's words made a deep impression on the two traders. They would have asked more questions, but Clyde reappeared to announce that the safari was ready.

Near by, Bonga, the ape-man, was basking in the sun watching the porters shoulder their equipment. Baru uttered some unintelligible sounds to the animal and pointed toward the jungle. The simian waddled off as directed and once more the procession headed north!

Back in their cabin, Durkin and Craddock watched Clyde and his caravan disappear.

"If what that kid says is true, there's a fortune waiting for us in Joba," Durkin speculated.

Craddock nodded his agreement.

They decided it would be best to follow the safari secretly if they were ever to possess those precious green diamonds. With only the hastiest preparations, they set out after Clyde and Baru.

On the march, the friendship between Clyde and Baru grew rapidly. They shared a common interest in animals. Along a narrow defile, the deep gorge below revealed a water hole. They saw zebras, water-buffalo, and other African animals drinking their fill. The scene seemed to bring the boy and the man closer together, as they discussed experiences they had had with different wild beasts.

But when Durkin and Craddock reached the same spot, a short time later, the sight threw them into a panic of fear as they realized they were now in the heart of the jungle. They trembled as a leopard came on the scene and engaged in a death battle with a water-buffalo.

THE natives in Clyde's safari gave evidence of great uneasiness. Ahead lay the land known as a country of trouble, danger, and uncertainty—the taboo land of the primitive. Well it might have been, with its jagged rocks, steep cliffs, and monstrously tall trees, which plunged the ground below into a dank, mystical darkness despite the bright sunlight above! Clyde sensed the trouble that was going on in the ranks. He called Nagga.

"Advise your men, I'll pay them

double when we get back to B'wanta," he ordered.

Nagga pointed off fearfully toward the distant hillside, and muttered, "Taboo."

"There's nothing to be afraid of, just keep them on the move," Clyde commanded.

The natives showed extreme terror. It looked like open rebellion, but Nagga's commands and reassurances held them in check. They picked up their packs and began the march again.

Durkin and Craddock had seen the natives stop in their tracks. In fact, they had almost run into the tail-end of the safari. But, darting into cover without being seen, Durkin confided to his companion that this was the country of evil spirits. It was haunted and known as a place from which men did not return.

They waited until the safari had resumed the march, and trailed them again, keeping well out of sight.

The procession continued its march another half hour, when a cry of consternation and abject fear rose up from the men. Swooping down out of the sky onto a gigantic stone ledge to watch them was a huge flying thing with great, flapping wings and a man's body!

Hell broke loose! The natives broke rank, dropped their burdens, and fled in all directions! From the jungle came their receding screams and yells!

The cause of their fear was a Bat-man —a creature with the body of a super-

Valerie, the beautiful captive Goddess of Joba.

man, and huge wings sprouting from his back. He watched the bewildered natives balefully, and suddenly took wing, flying off toward the north and Joba.

Meanwhile Clyde and Baru were alone.

Clyde said ruefully, "Something must have panicked them."

He hadn't seen the strange spectacle. The sudden outcry and flight of porters had kept his attention on the ground. But Baru had seen the Bat-man. He explained what had happened. Clyde was mystified, until the boy told him that the strange creature was one of the sentries of Joba who guarded the realm from "Outlanders"—the Jobans' name for all strangers like themselves.

The Bat-man would tell the High Priest of their coming, Baru warned Clyde. Instead of going to Joba through the Gorge, where they'd be expected, it would be better to go across the Land of Volcanoes. Though fraught with dangers, it would save them from the onslaughts of the Bat-men. Clyde agreed and, together, the strange couple headed for Volcano Land!

THE sentry Bat-man, Samabi, winged through the sky high over the jungle toward Joba—the mystic city. With its snow-white buildings, glistening in the bright sunlight, it looked like ancient Babylon. The buildings with their majestic porticos and massive columns stamped it a city from out of the past. Nestling in the middle of a deep valley, it was flanked by gigantic cliffs on all sides but the east. Here smoldered a volcano belching forth thick black clouds of smoke.

The Bat-man flew toward one of the largest buildings, snow-white except for its glistening domes of gold. He alighted on the spacious terrace of the beautiful edifice, and, folding his wings behind him, advanced toward one of the sentries.

"What news?" asked the sentry, who, like the messenger, was also of gigantic proportions with a pair of large wings folded at his back.

"A message for his Eminence!" cried Samabi. "Is he in the Temple?"

"Yes. Proceed."

Through the doors end down the Corridor of a Thousand Columns, Samabi continued to the massive hallway which was lined with incense burners and massive relics from out of the past. He finally arrived at a large double door leading into the Great Hall. At the far end was the chamber of the Chief High Priest, Dagna. Reaching it, Samabi knocked on the portal.

"Enter!" thundered a deep, guttural voice.

The High Priest was seated in a luxuriously decorated armchair, in back of which rested a fantastic idol, representing the true inhabitants of Joba, the Hidden City beyond the Mountains of Despair. Before Dagna an age-old volume lay open on a highly decorated block. The room looked like a page out of the Arabian Nights, filled with symbols of old-time magic and lighted with mysterious green and red lamps. The tall, saturnine-looking Dagna looked like a spirit from hell with his dark, piercing eyes, scowling features and ruthless manner.

"Well?" he stormed.

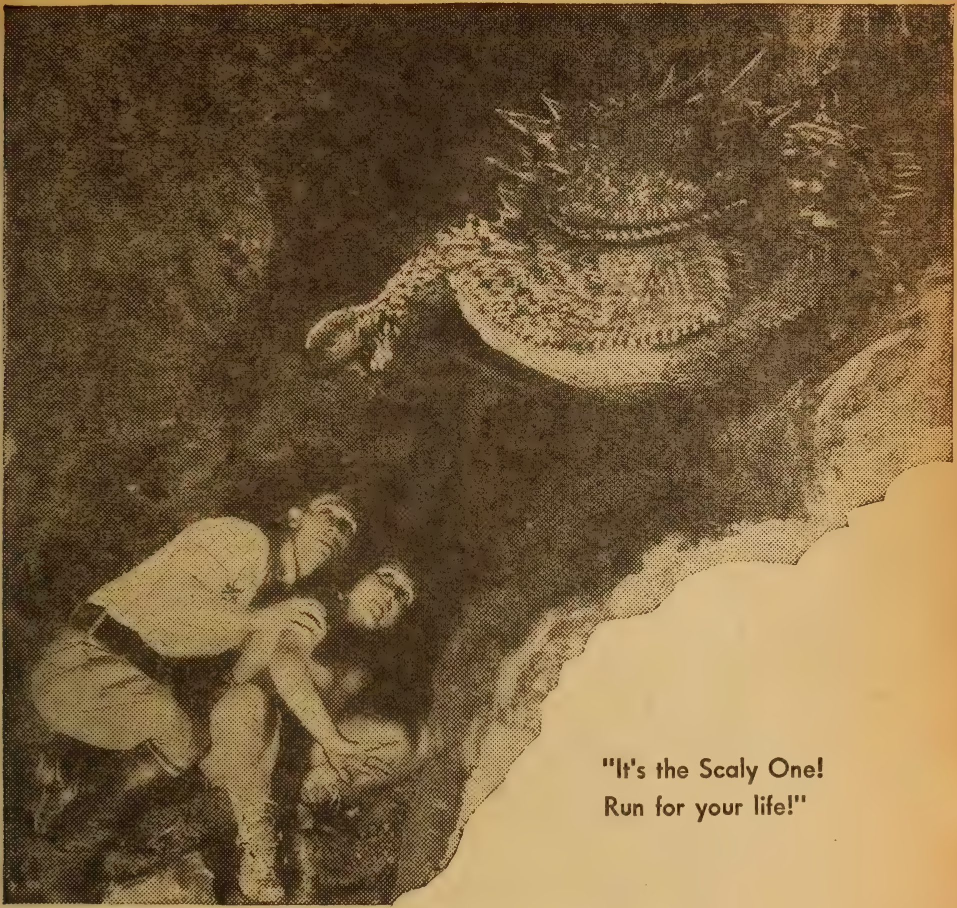
"The outpost guard reports to his Eminence Dagna, High Priest of Joba," said Samabi.

"Speak!" commanded Dagna curtly. "Speak!"

"The escaped child-slave, Baru, and another Outlander, are on their way to Joba," Samabi informed him.

A demoniacal expression flitted across Dagna's face as he heard this news. His lips curled scornfully to learn that the others in the safari had fled in terror. He ordered his sentry back to the terrace to await further orders.

IN another room of the Temple—the Lesser Throne Room, sumptuously laid



"It's the Scaly One! Run for your life!"

out with expensive drapes and furniture—was Valerie, Goddess of Joba. Beside her was the majestic Gorn, the bearded patriarch, who for years had been the friend and counsellor of the young woman. He stood before a small pedestal reading a huge book.

Valerie was in striking contrast to the dark-complexioned old man, with her fair skin, soft blue eyes, and golden hair. Young and beautiful and apparently enjoying every comfort that life could give her, she seemed unhappy.

"Why is it that Dagna is so determined to keep me here in Joba, oh wise Gorn?" asked Valerie.

Looking up from his book he exclaimed, "It was Dagna who brought you here as a child, and he is charged with the custody of the Goddess."

After a thoughtful moment, Valerie continued, "Once my brother, Baru, succeeds in reaching the Outland, he'll secure aid to help me return to my own people."

Gorn shook his head sadly. "Joba is well guarded by Dagna's Bat-men," he reminded her. "He realizes his power over the populace depends on your being here as their Goddess."

The door of the chamber suddenly opened. Dagna entered and approached the Throne. With a cheerless smile for Valerie who cowered from him instinctively, he asked:

"What does the book of laws provide,

Gorn, for one who flees from Joba and then would return?"

The old man thumbed through the pages of the book.

"It is written for such a one the punishment will be death, as prescribed by the Goddess of Joba."

"Good! Then my duty is clear!" exclaimed Dagna.

Although Valerie was overcome with fear, she tried to appear calm.

"Are there strangers about?" she asked. She did not dare ask if he had seen Baru.

He told her that two persons had been seen approaching Joba; that they would be arrested upon their arrival. He finished this statement with malicious satisfaction and left the chamber.

Valerie, upset, confided in Gorn that she believed one of the two strangers arriving must be her brother, Baru. She must warn him of his fate.

Gorn told her there was nothing she could do. The law was the law! And the law demanded death!

Dagna, back in his own quarters, touched a secret panel. The door slid back, revealing a speaking tube. He called to his Bat-men below and told them to watch for the Outlanders.

"Arrest them on sight!" he bellowed. The order was transmitted through the Temple and one of the Bat-men flew from the terrace to watch for the two strangers.

CLYDE and Baru reached the edge of a precipice. Spanned by a rope "bridge," it led to the Land of Volcanoes. It was here, said Baru, that he had escaped from Joba with Bonga some time before.

"I'll go first!" Clyde said. "You stay here. If it's safe I'll give you the signal."

Clyde was making the crossing when Durkin and Craddock, who had been following them steadily, struck a bend in the trail which opened the view so that they saw Clyde begin his journey across the chasm.

The animal trainer swung along the single rope, hand over hand, flirting with certain death. Finally he gained the opposite bank, and beckoned to Baru. The boy made the perilous crossing after him and the two headed into Volcano Land.

The boy and the man disappeared around the ledge and Durkin and Craddock advanced to the bridge. Craddock, however, feared the rope would not be strong enough to carry him. He refused to cross.

"There must be some other way," he said, and they began retracing their steps.

Meanwhile they heard the distant rumble of a Volcano. Craddock was beginning to lose interest in the venture. The country was overrun with dangers. There were earthquakes, lions, and rhinos —in fact all sorts of wild beasts. They would never get back alive.

Durkin reassured him. "Once we reach Joba," he said, "and tell the High Priest that Beatty and the boy are on the way to help the Goddess escape, the place will be ours!"

As they got further into Volcano Land, Clyde and Baru suddenly felt the earth come to life beneath their feet! Without warning the whole mountainside gave away! Great boulders tore loose from the top of the volcano, and came bounding down toward them!

In a panic, they saw the avalanche come crashing on straight for them. They'd be buried alive!

There was a terrific blast and the earth itself had suddenly become a writhing, flowing mass of moving dirt and rock. Clyde and Baru raced for their lives toward the foot of the mountain. They darted under a large projecting rock just in time to prevent being crushed to death. Shooting out over the top of their sheltering rock, tons of earth and boulders sailed overhead and crashed on down the slope!

The rumbling gradually subsided and the man and the boy were able to come out of their place of shelter. All around them was destruction and wreckage.

They hurried from the scene toward the entrance of a cave which Baru recognized as a pathway leading under the mountains of Joba. This, too, was the route he had taken when he had fled from Joba.

SAMABI, the outpost Bat-man, was flying over the trails leading up to the city of Joba. Below him, he espied both Durkin and Craddock making their way back to the main trail.

Down plunged the man-bird to within a few feet of where they were and demanded menacingly, "Whither bound, Outlanders?"

Craddock was terrified at the apparition. Durkin, bolstering up his courage, said, "We have a message for the High Priest of Joba!"

When he explained that they had come to warn Dagna of a plot to steal the Goddess of Joba, Samabi gave them the directions which would lead them to the palace. Then he took wing and flew away.

Arriving at the palace, Samabi notified Dagna of the approaching strangers. Dagna ordered that they be brought to him immediately.

The destruction of the intruders was Dagna's aim, now. He went to the secret panel and called through the speaking tube for Gorn, the philosopher.

A squad of Bat-men scour the country in search of the Outlanders.

"Does the book of laws permit Outlanders on a friendly mission to enter Joba and depart unmolested?" he asked when Gorn appeared before him. The kindly patriarch smiled. Gorn imagined that Dagna referred to Clyde and Baru.

He was quickly disillusioned when Dagna told him in no uncertain terms that two strangers were coming to advise him that the boy and the man were enemies of Joba. They sought to take away the Goddess!

"You know very well," Dagna went on, "if Valerie were to leave, the people would rise in open rebellion."

Gorn, realizing the hopelessness of the situation, bowed resignedly before the High Priest and returned to the Lesser Throne Room. Valerie was awaiting him impatiently. She was greatly distressed at the news and resolved anew that she must find some means of warning her brother!

BARU and Clyde had come to the Cavern of the Scaly Ones. They stopped momentarily to get a drink of refreshingly clear water from a bubbling spring. But as they drank, a strange sound caused them to look back. Coming for them was a huge horned toad, almost as tall as a human! Its opened jaws quivered threateningly!

"It's the Scaly One!" screamed Baru, "Run for your life!"

They set out as fast as they could with the giant reptile close after them. They dodged in and out of the cave's passages, but always the poisonous creature was behind them! They finally scampered up a ledge and saw it glide by with the speed of an express train!

"It looks like a prehistoric monster!" gasped Clyde, once they had lost sight of the evil creature.

"I hope we don't run into any more like him. We can't go back now!" Baru said ominously.

As they proceeded they were suddenly confronted with another weird monster—an enormous tarantula! It stood right in the middle of their path.

"There's another one!" cried Clyde as the deadly creature leaped toward them. They just missed its huge grasping legs.

Clyde and Baru scampered up the side of the cavern as the hairy tarantula reached up menacingly after them. They loosened some stones accidentally from the side of the cave, which saved their lives. One crashed down on the beast, and the tarantula lumbered off. They hurried on, watching warily for new dangers. They hadn't long to wait.

Farther ahead was a deep pit. "Look!" fairly gasped Baru.

Below were two insects of gigantic proportions suddenly advancing toward each other in a death battle. One was a demonlike beetle as big as a horse. The other was a hairy black mammoth scorpion. They watched fascinated as the two enemies came together in mortal combat.

The two insects collided with a thud. They backed away from each other and crashed full force again. The beetle seized the scorpion's body in his massive jaws! His smaller antagonist sent a swordlike projection on his forehead plunging into the beetle's mid-section!

"It'll be the finish for one of them! It's like all the laws of nature—'the survival of the fittest'," said Clyde.

"He's killing him!" Baru cried excitedly.

"Then let's hurry," suggested Clyde. "It'll be over in a minute and we don't want him to turn on us." They hurried off as the beetle slowly collapsed under the scorpion's thrusts.

Soon they reached a veiled obstruction—a massive spider web! The giant insect, suddenly awakened from his sleep in the center of the web, espied them. Baru was momentarily frozen to the spot, but Clyde had the presence of mind to seize the boy's hand and drag him on.

As they fled past, the spider shot a thick skein of web after them. Baru got entangled in it and Clyde whipped out his hunting knife. The spider crept to the edge of the web about to strike, but Clyde severed the bonds holding Baru and yanked him out of danger.

"We'll be lucky to get out of here alive!" gasped Clyde. "Let's make a run for it!"

He and the boy broke out into a steady trot, but not for long. Suddenly they stopped dead staring in horror and revulsion at a mammoth silver fish stretched across their path. Looking like an elephantine dinosaur of old, the fish had obviously not seen them.

They proceeded up the side of the cavern to a small jutting ledge and crawled along this narrow path. They advanced up to the monster. For a moment, it seemed to sense their presence for it wiggled convulsively. Then it quieted again while Clyde and Baru scurried on, looking back every now and then to make sure the fish had not seen them.

AHEAD was encouragement for they could now see a tiny opening that led out of the cave! They gained the entrance and discovered themselves once again in a thick jungle foliage, in striking contrast to the rock formations that characterized the other end of the cave.

"If nothing stops us on the way, I suppose we should be in Joba pretty soon," Clyde said.

"Not so quickly," Baru told him. "We still have to cross Tiger Land."

"Tiger Land in Africa? That's news to me," mused Clyde.

"It's just a small tribe of savages

The strange creatures ringed around him poised their spears, ready to run him through.

who brought some tigers into this jungle to worship them," explained Baru.

The puzzled look on Clyde's face gave way to one of satisfaction.

"Now it's all clear to me," he said. "I was trying to figure how there could be tigers in this part of Africa. This accounts for the one I caught last week."

As Clyde and Baru continued on through the tropical wilderness, they were seen by a Tiger-man scout. The news sped back to the Tiger village. A score of Tiger-men were doing a slow, rhythmical dance around a pit to the accompaniment of a beating tom-tom.

In the pit beneath them, a massive man-eating tiger paced back and forth in a fury of pent-up savagery, occasionally scowling upward as if seeking a victim or a means of escape.

Within a few minutes, these strange Tiger-men, dressed in weird tiger skins and headdresses, had completely surrounded the unsuspecting Baru and Clyde. They were closing in when the boy suddenly caught sight of them. He nudged his companion.

"Quick!" yelled Clyde, "get up in that tree! I'll lead them off the trail!"

Baru was at first unwilling, but Clyde left him no other choice. He plunged through a break in the ring of Tiger-men.

His ruse was successful, for he had drawn the pursuing Tiger-men far away by the time he was surrounded again. The strange creatures ringed around him poised their spears, ready to run him through. There was nothing for Clyde to do but surrender.

Prodded by the Tiger-men's spears, Clyde proceeded toward their village. One of the scouts who had seen Baru had vainly sought for the boy but lost him in the foliage. He returned, apparently content with the prospect of one sacrificial victim to offer the Tiger God!

SEEING his friend taken prisoner, Baru gave voice to a strange jungle call. The answer came a moment later—a weird cry from Bonga who had made the journey through the trees close on the heels of his human companions. And in the brief span of a minute, the two of them were swinging their way through the high branches to Clyde's rescue! When they paused next, they were perched high in a tree in the center of the Tiger village!

Below them, unsuspecting natives began their savage ceremonies, preparatory to flinging their captive to the enraged tiger in the pit around which they danced. While the tom-toms beat, the tiger lashed itself into a fury, snarling and leaping to get at human meat. Time after time, his cruel claws dug earth from the rim of his imprisoning pit. Each unsuccessful try for freedom served only to increase the beast's rage!

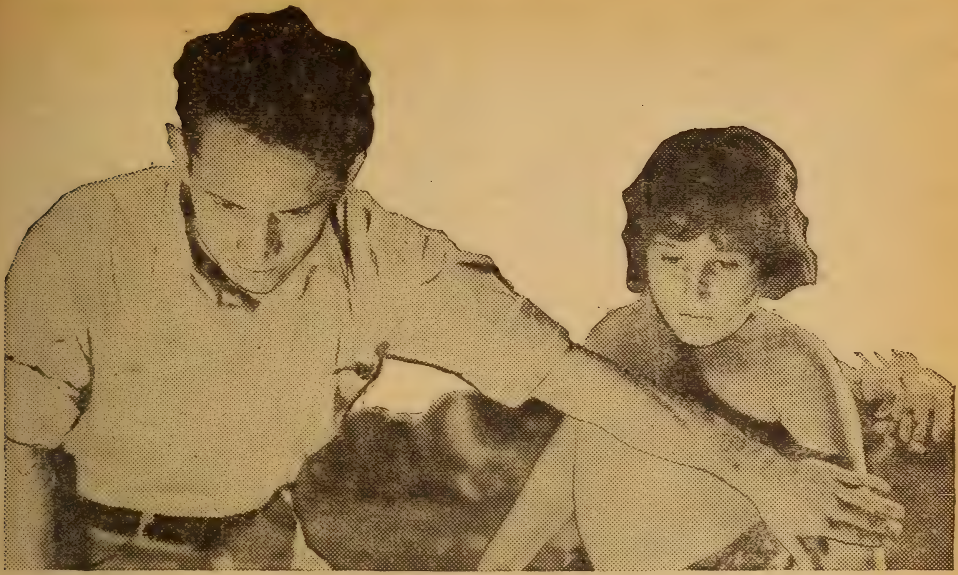
Suddenly his captors hurled Clyde toward the pit!

Within a foot of the fatal spot, he whirled about. Catching a native off guard, he grabbed his spear and started to fight his way out. Struck with consternation the group of savages hesitated. Then they closed in on him quickly to prevent his escape.

Now fighting for his life, Clyde broke through the guard of the nearest man, smashing him to the ground. He met the attack of another Tiger-man, deftly parrying his savage blows. He was almost free as another warrior behind him lurched forward, bringing his club down on Clyde's head with a crushing force!

The other natives picked up his unconscious body and hurled him to the pit below where the maddened tiger waited expectantly! They crowded around the edges of the pit to watch the dying agonies of their victim.

Clyde, though stunned by the Tiger-man's club, regained consciousness just in time to seize a stick close at hand. As the Tiger-men shrieked weird cries in expectation of seeing Clyde torn to pieces, he defended himself from the



At the bottom of the pit, they saw dozens of man-eating crocodiles milling about!

ferocious beast—a task which called forth all the training of years as a master of wild animals!

In time, Clyde had the animal under complete control, even squatting to the ground and rolling over at his bidding! There was a loud outcry from the natives. They stared in amazement at the uncanny power of this strange white man.

Then, infuriated by the realization that their Tiger-god had been tricked out of a sacrifice, they poised to hurl their spears into Clyde!

Baru and Bonga dropped, with ear-splitting cries, from the branches immediately above them! The panic-stricken natives thought some strange gods—gods even more powerful than their Tiger-god—had come to avenge their actions. With fear-inspired shrieks, they fled in every direction!

As the Tiger-men disappeared, Baru and Bonga sped to the edge of the pit. They made a hand chain, reached down for Clyde and pulled him to freedom while the tiger, still subdued, looked on helplessly.

On the ground again, shaken by his experience, Clyde looked around anxiously to see if the Tiger-men were returning to capture him again.

Sensing his fears, Baru laughed.

"Bonga will cover our tracks for us," he said. "Bonga will take care of the Tiger-men while we hurry on to Joba. We should be able to make it before sundown!"

AS Samabi, the Bat-man messenger brought the message to the High Priest in the temple of Joba that the two Outlanders he wished to see were awaiting his orders, Durkin and Craddock shifted about uneasily. All around them Bat-men looked on suspiciously, talking in inaudible whispers.

"Imagine a city like this, hidden away in the jungle all these years and nobody on the outside knowing anything about it," Durkin murmured. His eyes rolled covetously over the Babylonian picture of the buildings and landscapes surrounding the great Joban Temple.

"That doesn't bother me," responded Craddock. "All I'm interested in is where they keep those green diamonds!"

"We won't have any trouble finding that out now," Durkin reassured him.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Craddock. "I don't like the looks of any of these—people."

"Don't worry about them," said Durkin. "When we tell the High Priest that Beatty and the kid are on their way here to help the Goddess escape. He'll do anything to help us!"

"I hope you're right," responded Craddock somewhat skeptically. Samabi returned, ending their chance for further plotting.

"His Eminence will see you at once in his private chamber. Follow me!" instructed the Bat-man.

The two men followed their strange escort through the corridor of a Thousand Columns and the huge doorway leading into the Great Hall. Eventually, they reached Dagna's chamber.

In response to Samabi's knock at the door, Dagna invited them to enter. The men were ushered into his presence and the High Priest ordered Samabi back to his post. When they were alone, he addressed the strangers.

"Your message must be of great importance to you to risk the perils of the journey to Joba."

"We were in the hope that the reward would justify that risk," said Durkin.

"What reward can our Hidden City offer to Outlanders?" inquired Dagna.

Durkin and Craddock exchanged quick glances as the former said:

"We have heard that Joba has a great store of green diamonds."

Dagna's surprise at his statement was undisguised. "Green diamonds?"

"Yes," confided Craddock, "like the one you wear on your finger."

Dagna looked curiously at the precious gem in his ring and, for the first time, realized its intrinsic value. "You are easily satisfied, strange men," said Dagna. "What is this message you bring?"

"You seek two Outlanders," explained Durkin. "They are approaching Joba by way of Tiger Land."

"Then," admitted Dagna, "that is why my men have failed to find any trace of them. If what you say is true you shall be doubly rewarded."

Durkin and Craddock exchanged quick glances as Dagna went to the speaking tube in the secret panel to pass the information to his guards.

A short while later, a sacred messenger stealthily made his way to Valerie's side with warning of her brother's danger. He told her of the High Priest's instructions that the boy and his companion were not to enter Joba alive. Then, to her amazement, he offered to get word to the boy of his danger.

"That would mean your death!" Valerie exclaimed.

"It is the least I can do to repay you. You once saved me from a fate worse than death," the sacred messenger said.

Before the girl had a chance to speak, the Bat-man had leaped from the window! Spreading his wings, he flew in the direction of the Ruined Temple, but not before he had been seen by Dagna, Durkin, and Craddock who were looking over a small casket of precious stones near one of the front windows of the Temple!

"The sacred messenger!" Dagna exclaimed. A cunning thought crossed the High Priest's mind and he advanced toward the secret panel and placed his ear to the tube.

Connected with the Lesser Throne Room, he heard Gorn ask the girl what the sacred messenger could do to help her brother! She told him that he was on his way to warn Baru and Clyde that Dagna's men were lying in wait for them in the secret passageway in the Ruined Temple.

Furious at this interference with his plans, the High Priest was about to issue new orders to his Bat-men when Durkin pointed to his gun.

"I can stop the messenger with this," he said.

"This casket of diamonds is yours if you succeed!" exclaimed Dagna.

Durkin opened the window, raised his rifle, took steady aim, and fired. To Dagna's amazement, the sacred messenger convulsed in the air, and dropped to earth like a plummet stone.

Dagna turned toward his visitors and cried, "Thanks to your splendid magic, my men will now have no trouble in stopping Baru and his companion from reaching Joba!"

BARU and Clyde had made steady progress through the dense jungle, and were now only a short distance away from the Ruined Temple. Clyde anxiously eyed the darkening skies.

"It's getting late, Baru," he said. "We'd better hurry."

They quickened their steps and finally, a short distance ahead, saw the Ruined Temple through the thinning foliage. Clyde was about to burst out into the open when Baru stopped him.

"That's not the way to the secret passage. It's there behind those shrubs." He indicated a clump of underbrush close to the ruined wall.

Reaching the spot, Baru disclosed a trap-door entrance which swung open easily when he touched a hidden lever. Together, the man and boy disappeared inside the dark passageway.

As they groped their way into the darkness, something prompted Baru to look back at the passage entrance. As he did, he uttered a warning cry.

"Look!"

Clyde whirled about in time to see the secret door close behind them. And, standing out in sharp relief on the door as it swung shut were the shadows of the two Bat-men who had trailed and trapped them!

"We'll have to hurry!" he exclaimed. "If they have followed us this far, others may be waiting for us at the other end—if we can shake off those two!" he finished with a gesture toward their pursuers.

A fork in the passage gave out into a small recess in the wall. Baru took Clyde's hand and led him into it, hoping that the Bat-men would go past them unsuspectingly.

Facing them was a small opening in the wall barely large enough for one person to crawl through at a time. Clyde's hopes rose as, twenty feet ahead, he could see the faint, reflected glimmer of fading daylight. The boy clambered into the bore and Clyde followed at his heels.

Baru had gained the other side and Clyde was in the middle of the bore when the pursuing Bat-men espied him. They rushed forward, one of them plunging his spear at the opening, but it was too late. Clyde had already reached the other side!

Knowing well that their danger increased every moment, the man and boy raced along the tunnel swiftly and silently. Their headlong flight almost sent them hurtling into an open pit in their path. At the bottom of the pit they saw dozens of man-eating crocodiles milling about in shallow water!

Recoiling from this new danger, Clyde glanced back and saw the two Bat-men almost at their heels. He motioned Baru to follow him.

They skirted the edge of the crocodile pit and sped toward a huge wood and metal sarcophagus which lay against the wall of the cave, its lid swung idly open. The failing light, reflected from the setting sun, helped to conceal their actions as Clyde pushed the boy inside and followed him, pulling the cover down over them.

The two Bat-men reached the sarcophagus and were about to pass by when one of them noticed footprints which led up to its edge and then disappeared. There was an agonizing sound of splintering wood and crashing metal as the

Bat-men's spears transfixed the case with deadly force. But when the savages removed the lid of the sarcophagus they found it empty!

Clyde and Baru, inside their hideaway, had relaxed for a moment against the hinged back of the sarcophagus which suddenly gave away and sent them sprawling to the ground! By the time their pursuers had cast their spears, the two Outlanders were nowhere around.

They were hiding in a spot where the Bat-men would never think of looking—they were hanging by their fingers from the inside of the crocodile pit while the murderous jaws of the fierce creatures below snapped in anticipation of tender morsels to come!

They maintained this position until the Bat-men ran past and out of sight. Then, noiselessly, they hoisted themselves up to the path and resumed their journey toward the Palace.

After what seemed an interminable time, the secret passage came to an end and revealed for the first time the end of their quest, the City of Joba!

DURKIN and Craddock had completely won the confidence of Dagna. Their efforts to thwart the plans of Baru and Beatty and thus save the Goddess (and, incidentally, Dagna's own authority over his people) put the High Priest in a friendly mood.

"Come," he said to them, as they talked together in his own private chambers in the Temple. "You shall be rewarded with the green diamonds you came so far to get."

Dagna led them in a secret hallway toward the Processing Room where the precious stones were kept. Pressing a concealed button he opened the door that led into this jewel repository.

Durkin and Craddock were amazed to see the intricate machinery that had been set up in the chamber. There were various contrivances, from a powerful-looking piece of apparatus, similar to a concrete mixer, to all sorts of scientific instruments, probably used for measuring and inspecting and polishing the gems.

Suddenly their eyes caught the flash of a tray of precious stones. The men could hardly believe what they saw and watched greedily as Dagna reached into the tray and held out a handful of stones for their closer examination.

Neither of the visitors could believe that the stones were actually mined in Joba, so Dagna offered to show them the quarry which was just beyond a second door. Hardly had he turned his back and disappeared in the direction indicated, than Craddock dipped into the tray to pocket a handful of the nugget gems. Durkin knocked them angrily from his hand.

"Don't be a fool!" he growled. "We'll have all we can carry before we're through!"

They joined Dagna in the mine which was a beehive of activity. There were two Bat-men overseers supervising the work of a score of slaves, like their masters in every particular except that they had no wings. The traders watched in fascination.

"Are there any more mines like this in Joba?" inquired Durkin.

"This is the only one which produces the green diamonds we hold sacred," was Dagna's reply. He was about to show them more of his precious wonders when a panting messenger arrived.

"Your Eminence!" the Bat-man gasped. "Word has come that the two Outlanders have escaped! They are now loose, somewhere in Joba!"

Dagna's fury was as uncontrollable as it was sudden. "Clear the quarry!" he shouted. "To the cells with the slaves!"

Whirling back to the messenger he commanded, "The lions—the hunting lions! Have them made ready if I should want them on an instant's notice!"

Then, forgetting his two Outland guests, he disappeared up a ladder and headed straight for the Lesser Throne Room occupied by Valerie.

"There is unrest among the people," he told her, preferring not to let her know the truth. "It would be best for you to remain in the Sanctuary."

Though she tried to convince him that the people would not harm her, Dagna remained insistent. He urged her toward the Sanctuary, and when she had gone, gave explicit orders to Gorn that no one was to enter or leave the Sanctuary without his permission.

CLYDE and Baru had made their way to the lower wall of the Temple and lay in concealment to avoid Bat-men who were continually passing to and fro. When the street appeared deserted for a moment, Beatty cupped his hands and boosted Baru up to the balcony of the Temple. He clambered up himself a moment later.

The balcony rimmed the terrace that was just below the Goddess' Sanctuary. Concealing themselves behind a plant on the terrace, the boy and the man saw a lone Bat-man guard, his back to them. First making sure there was no one else about, Clyde motioned the boy to remain where he was. Silently he crept toward the Bat-man!

With his powerful hands clamped suddenly on the Bat-man's throat and mouth, Clyde struggled with him until he was completely overcome! A moment later he and Baru were again cautiously heading toward the Corridor of a Thousand Columns which led toward Valerie's quarters.

Behind them they heard approaching footsteps and they dodged behind one of the huge pillars just as a powerful Bat-man entered the long hall. Tense and breathless they waited for a sign from the newcomer that he had seen them. But he walked on without notice.

Once again they resumed their dangerous quest. This time they were interrupted by the sound of approaching voices. Clyde experimentally opened a near-by door and sought refuge in a large spacious room. To Baru it was strangely familiar.

"This is Dagna's room!" he exclaimed finally. And at that same moment they heard Dagna's voice on the other side of the door. Dagna was heading for his own quarters!

Hastily dropping behind a chest, they heard him enter the room, go to the speaking tube, and tell his men to guard all passageways and entrances to the Palace. "The Outlanders must die!"

Fortunately for Clyde and the boy, Dagna had his back to them, and while he was still talking through the speaking tube, Clyde and Baru slid through the door that led into the Processing Room without detection.

"Can we get to your sister's chambers from here?" inquired Clyde.

"Yes, but first we must go through the mine," Baru informed him. As he led the way to the secret door and on into the mine, the door suddenly slammed shut behind them!

Durkin and Craddock had been looking over the jewels in the Processing Room as Clyde and Baru had escaped from Dagna's chamber. They had hidden until the two intruders had passed out of the room. Then, believing that they had trapped them, they hurried back to find Dagna and tell him the good news!

Dagna immediately gave orders to release the hunting lions! And to block the exit leading out to the upper platform at the end of the mine corridor—the same exit to which Baru was, at that moment, guiding his friend!

IN a moment it was as though the furies of the world had suddenly been turned loose! A deafening roar announced the entrance of a dozen savage lions who burst into the mine from all directions!

Baru and Clyde broke out in a desperate run and reached the upper platform just in time to avoid a face-to-face encounter with the wild beasts. They found a door there, flung it open. But their escape was blocked—Durkin and Craddock stood before them, guarding the exit!

Clyde whispered to Baru, and then without warning hurled himself at Craddock, sending him crashing into Durkin. Before they had a chance to recover, Clyde dove at them again. Tearing at each other like wild animals, the three men fought with inhuman fury.

The odds began to tell on Clyde.

Baru, who had been standing on the side lines, tore away from the door to help Clyde. But Dagna, rushing in to supervise the capture of the intruders, tripped him and seized his wrist in a steel-like grip!

Clyde freed himself with superhuman effort from the two men and was preparing for another attack. As he paused a moment for breath, Samabi and his Bat-men charged in from the Great Hall. Clyde leaped at Craddock, smashing him against the wall, and then whirled into Durkin.

Both men fell against the door giving out on the upper platform. Their bodies hit the door with such violence that it flew open. Clyde, swept on by the momentum of his attack, went through the portal onto the platform and off into space, plunging down to the floor below into the midst of the roaring lions!

The beasts thundered in surprise and huddled for a moment in a corner as Clyde landed with a crash on the floor. Then, in one snarling accord, the animals leaped forward at his prostrate body!

Dagna, the two white men, and the Bat-men gathered around the door and peered below. What they saw pleased them. The lions were tearing at the prostrate Clyde!

Young Baru, in the excitement of the moment, wrested himself free from Dagna's grip and plunged through space onto the floor beside his friend! Seizing a near-by stick, he fearlessly drove the lions off. They charged at him, only to recoil from his fearful yells and painful proddings!

The crafty smile disappeared from Dagna's smirking face. A look of hate crept over it. The boy was ruining his plans!

Now completely master of the situation, Baru forced the savage beasts back into the passageway and drove them all out of the chamber. The heavy door clanged as he slammed it after them!

He ran back to Clyde, and shook him out of his daze. They must hurry to the Processing Room before Dagna and his henchmen could overtake them!

Craddock and Durkin started for the stairs to the mine floor to run after the escaping pair when Dagna stopped them.

"Wait. They can't escape. That passage leads into my private chamber!" he said. "Samabi, you and the guards stay here in case they try to escape from this exit. We'll head them off at the other end!"

CLYDE and Baru reached Dagna's quarters before the others. They discovered Durkin's gun resting against a piece of furniture in the room. They were none too soon. Clyde had just picked up the weapon when the door swung open and his pursuers entered.

"Get over to that wall!" Clyde barked, covering them with the gun. "Baru, you get that drapery cord and we'll tie them up!"

Dagna and the traders eyed Clyde warily as Baru removed the cord and handed it over.

"Good!" Clyde said shortly. "Now get your sister from the Sanctuary! We can be out of Joba before the alarm is—— Get back there!" he yelled suddenly at Dagna who had taken a step forward.

Baru left the room and Clyde tossed

the drapery cord to Durkin, commanding him to tie the hands and feet of his fellow prisoners. This done, Clyde made Durkin back toward him and tied a rope around his hands.

He then bound all three men together and threw a heavy drape over them, binding it tight with rope to muffle their cries for help. Gun in hand he started out for the Sanctuary to meet Baru and his sister Valerie.

Racing through the passages of the Temple, Baru had small trouble in locating his sister. They flew into each other's embrace, and might have remained in that pose indefinitely had it not been for a discreet cough from the doorway. The boy turned to see Clyde standing there.

"Valerie," he said, "this is the man who has helped me to come back to you. This is Clyde Beatty."

The beautiful girl smiled gratefully through her happy tears. "I don't know how to thank you——" she began.

Clyde cut her off with a disarming gesture. "Baru exaggerates," he said simply. Her radiant loveliness made him want to say more, but he knew that better opportunities would soon present themselves.

Valerie looked anxiously at the empty doorway. Suddenly she felt concern for her rescuers. "The others——" she asked. "Is it all right?"

Baru laughed happily. "Everything is all right again!" he cried, the jubilance of his tone ringing clear. "You are free, now, Valerie! And Clyde and I will see that you are safe in civilization as soon as we can get there!"

Together, the three Outlanders walked out into the empty corridor and freedom.

ANOTHER THRILLING
COMPLETE NOVEL

on the adventures of

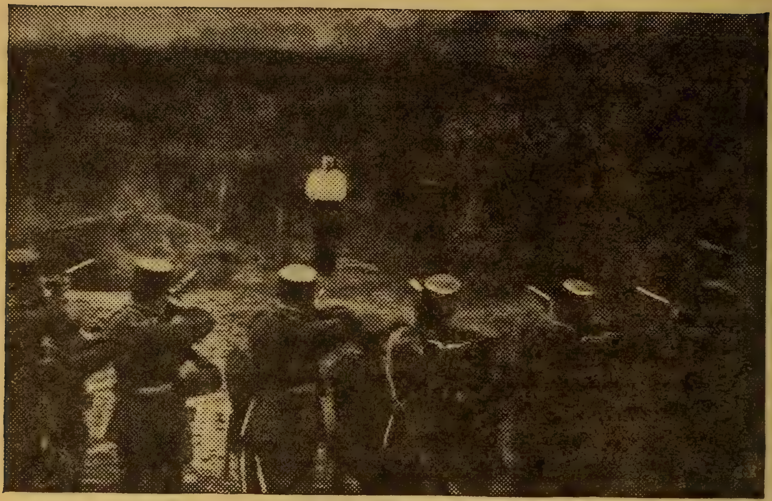
CLYDE and BARU

will appear in an early issue of

Movie Action Magazine

WATCH FOR IT!

SPY 77



One man against thousands—thousands against one! No man is safe while 77 is still at large!

THAT autumn, the Italians were smothering every offensive attempted by the Austrian army in the Alps. Hitherto it had been a back-and-forth struggle along that snow-clad front, with each side winning a ridge here or a peak there, by surprise attacks. But now there were no surprise attacks by the Austrians, for every move of their army was anticipated by the troops that faced them.

General Fleishner, the key Austrian leader, was dead; his troops routed by an Italian barrage that opened at six in the morning, twenty minutes before a planned Austrian offensive that every one had supposed secret! Four Austrian spies had been dispatched to Rome to find out from whom in Vienna the Italians were getting their information—every one had been stopped, discovered, arrested, and shot at the border!

C. 38 had been the last. Even now he waited in an Italian prison beyond the frontier, with a firing squad a few hours away.

The Austrian High Command was at an impasse. At that, their problem was nothing compared to that which confronted its Secret Service, upon whom rested the responsibility.

Colonel von Waldmuller, at his desk in the Secret Service Headquarters in Vienna, put down the missive that told him of Fleishner's defeat and death. "This," he said harshly, "is becoming impossible."

Beside him, his aide de camp, Captain Larco, spoke from a granite-cold face. "It makes one almost suspect that some one *here* is giving away information."

"Exactly," said the Colonel in a toneless voice. "I can't make it out."

Grasping the telephone, he spoke, waited, spoke again. He was calling to learn whether C. 38 had passed the Italian border, and he learned the answer. "That makes the fourth," he said, simply.

Captain Larco nodded. There was a tense pause, during which von Waldmuller arose and paced the floor. "You know," he said suddenly, jerking up, "I'm absolutely convinced that this is the work of '77'——"

His A. D. C. nodded again, bitter agreement. There was no need to elaborate on that, for both knew that 77 was the code number of an Italian spy operating in Vienna, though his identity was a mystery. It was to learn that identity that four Austrian spies had already been sacrificed!

A knock sounded. An orderly entered. He bore a printed form, a request for an interview, which he handed to the Colonel. Von Waldmuller accepted it brusquely, his mind on other things, but when he saw the name on the slip he looked almost startled.

Michael von Hombergk. *Requests interview with:* Colonel von Waldmuller.

The Colonel passed it to his aide. "What do you make of that?" he said slowly, for neither of them had seen or heard of that man in almost two years.

BEFORE the War, it had been. Here in Vienna. Von Hombergk had been a *Hauptmann*, then—a Captain—attached to the General Staff. And no officer had been better liked by both subordinates and superiors.

In those days, that seemed far away now to Colonel von Waldmuller, Vienna had been the gayest city in Europe. Even up to the outbreak of the War, she had harbored and entertained the nobility of every nation.

Captain Michael von Hombergk had been no more of a cavalier than any other Austrian officer, but it had been his misfortune to devote his attention to the Marchesa Galdi, an Italian lady, who subsequently left Vienna hastily and by night. And almost simultaneous with her flight, a mystifying tip had come in to the Secret Service regarding Captain von Hombergk. A search had been made of his rooms—and a map found, showing the new Austrian gun emplacements!

Von Hombergk, a proven traitor, had been left with a pistol and the expectation that he would use it on himself. Instead, he had chosen to vanish. And, until now, he had never been heard of since.

Captain Larco murmured: "Fancy him daring to show his face in here!"

The Colonel had already told the orderly that he would see the visitor, adding that von Hombergk was not to leave the building without his permission. Now, to Larco, he said: "Well, you must admit he's got courage—you'd better go into the Listening Room and take down the interview in shorthand."

Larco nodded and went out swiftly. A moment later the outside door opened

THE CAST

CARL DIEHL	von Hombergk
GRETA NISSEN	Marcella
Esme Percy	Bleuntzli
Don Alvarado	Valenti
Austin Trevor	Captain Larco

Directed by Arthur Woods
Story and screenplay by Arthur Woods and Frank Vosper
Produced by British Independent Pictures

A fictionization of the First Division picture of the same title.

to admit Michael von Hombergk, clad in the uniform of an Austrian Corporal.

He was a tall, strong, handsome man—and the only thing that detracted from his appearance was a certain grim stolidity about his expression.

Colonel von Waldmuller looked him up and down. For the moment he forgot the pressing problem of 77. Gazing upon this ex-Captain whose sword he had taken almost two years before, he demanded, "How is it that you are in uniform?"

Von Hombergk, somber of face, level-eyed, made answer: "I joined up under an assumed name, and I have been on the Russian front for the last year and a half. I've been hit twice and was recently promoted Sergeant. I was discharged from the hospital yesterday. My papers——"

The Colonel looked through the book of papers, handed them back. "Well?" He was curt, cold. "And what do you want?"

Von Hombergk kept his poise. This was no more than what he had expected. "By army traditions," he said quietly, "I ought to have blown my brains out, I suppose. One word from you now, and I may be arrested and shot. However, I——"

He came forward a pace. His voice became choked with passion and pleading. "Herr Oberst, I knew nothing about the plans! It must have been a plot! Give me a chance to clear my name! Give me the most dangerous job you know!"

Von Waldmuller did not stir. But those last words brought a picture to his brain—C. 38—marching out to face an Italian firing squad——

The Colonel backed off to his desk, rested a hand on it. Something about this fellow moved him. And there was no denying—he needed a man now, at once, to try again where four others had failed. Number 77 had to be exposed and stopped! An Austrian spy had to get into Italy!

Finally von Waldmuller nodded, slowly. "I will give you your chance," he said. "Come to me tonight."

Von Hombergk, his eyes flashing, saluted.

IN an Italian hospital near Milan three days later, a buzz of talk was going back and forth among the wounded soldiers. A visitor was expected—"the beautiful Sorella"—and every man there knew it meant presents of wine and cigarettes. What they did not know was that the beautiful Sorella was, in reality, the Marchesa Marcella Galdi. Nor did they ever guess that she ranked among the highest in the Italian Intelligence Service.

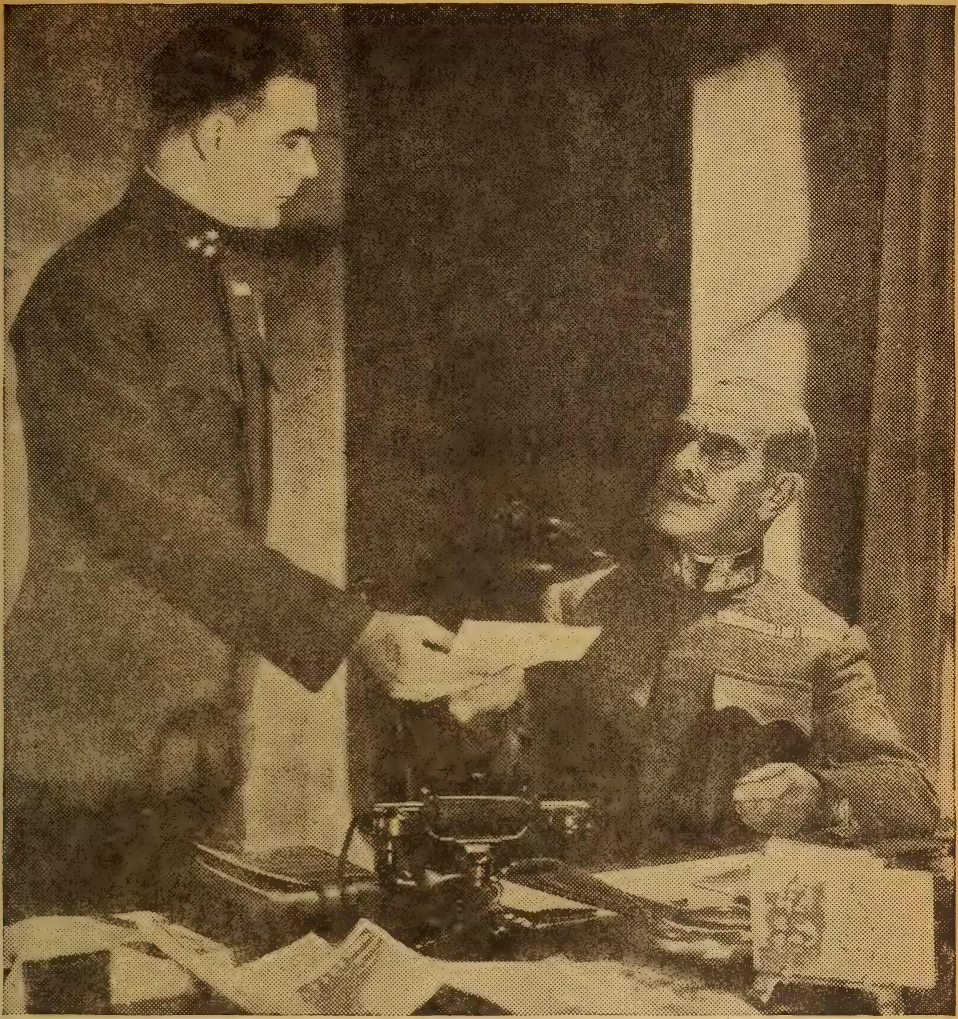
In the hospital office, preparatory to making her rounds, Marcella was recalling the talk she had had with her chief, Colonel Romanelli, a few hours before. An Austrian Fokker had passed the Italian lines three days earlier, and though it had been shot down, the pilot had not been found.

"The man who got through in that plane was slightly wounded," Romanelli had said, "so he will probably be in one of the military hospitals near Beluna. He'll be wearing an Italian uniform, of course. But we must find him. Now I want you to make a tour of the hospitals and see if you can locate him."

"Of course, Signor Romanelli," Marcella had answered.

The doctor came in, and the Superiora. With them, Marcella started through the wards. With each wounded man she exchanged a few words and gave him a gift from the basket on her arm. Their worshipful eyes failed to notice that she studied each intently.

About the middle of one ward she stopped beside a bed whose name card read, "Enrico Rossi, 87th Infantry Regiment." Her eyes lifted to the face of the soldier who stood before her.



The Colonel passed it to his aide. "What do you make of that?"

Something stopped within her.

"I—I don't think I've seen you here before," she managed to say.

Von Hombergk was a frozen thing, gazing upon the face that had haunted him since the night of his disgrace in Vienna, two years before.

"Er—no," he finally managed.

Marcella forced herself to speak, while duty and something else conflicted inside her. "Were you seriously wounded?" she asked, and felt like adding—"in that Fokker?"

"Just a flesh wound—my arm."

They stared at each other. Marcella took a package from her basket, held it out. Von Hombergk accepted it without a word. The beautiful Sorella passed on to other beds. Hardly knowing what she did, she talked, gave packages.

As for von Hombergk, he stood like a statue at the foot of his bed, staring after the Marchesa, until the Superiora fell back and chided him for his impoliteness. Her words dragged him from his memories.

"Sorry, Superiora. You're quite right. I'll go and apologize."

They came together, alone, in the hospital office.

"You must get away from here!" Marcella said pleadingly. "You must go back to Austria, at once! They know all about you in Rome. You're in great danger!"

Von Hombergk shook his head. "I'm sorry. I can't."

"Very well, if you won't take the chance I'm offering you, I shall have to give you up as an enemy spy!"

The man said somberly: "You must do as you like."

"Michael, you can't make me do a thing like that. Surely, you must believe me! I'm betraying my country to let you go. Don't force me to give you up—please!"

For a long moment he looked at her. He had thought at first, upon guessing that she was of the Italian Secret Service, that it had been she who had ruined him two years before. Now he doubted it. It had been that Bluntzili, no doubt, who had always been with her.

Bluntzili would be in Rome—another reason for him to carry out his plans.

He swung to the door.

"Michael!" she called, but von Hombergk was gone.

THAT night he took a train for Rome, going in the guise of a traveling salesman of clocks and jewelry. Civilian clothes and a suitcase of merchandise he had obtained from a Milan watchmaker who was working for the Austrians, transformed him from a bogus Italian soldier to a respectable merchant. He had already notified his "uncle"—an art dealer in Rome named Davila—of his coming.

The journey was uneventful except that a newspaper reporter in his compartment examined him with some curiosity when passports were shown. Von Hombergk's forged papers were accepted without question. The next night he was in the Palace Hotel, dressed for dinner, with Davila lounging near by.

The plan of action was already laid. Davila, an art dealer of some prominence, was close to the Conte Valenti, a client. As a Mister Van Marken, a friend and fellow art dealer, von Hombergk was to meet Valenti and through him become acquainted with Colonel Romanelli, of the Italian Secret Service. And through Romanelli, the hope was to pick up a clue as to the identity of Number 77 in Vienna.

Von Hombergk, giving a last twist to his white tie, said smiling: "Well, I must say you've fitted out your nephew excellently—er—'Uncle.'"

The art dealer laughed, eying the dinner clothes. "Perfect! They might have been made for you."

"Yes. I *don't* look like a desperate criminal!"

"Perhaps," was the answer, "it's just as well. Read that." He passed a newspaper to the Austrian.

Von Hombergk read a notice headed, "FIVE THOUSAND LIRA REWARD," and under that a story of his disappearance from the hospital in Milan. The authorities were now certain that "Enrico Rossi" was an Austrian spy. He was badly wanted!

Von Hombergk laid it down, thinking of Marcella.

Davila brought him out of his abstraction by saying that Conte Valenti was waiting downstairs to meet him. Van Hombergk shook himself, and they went out——

The Conte Valenti was at the foot of the staircase—a smallish, dark-haired young aristocrat who seemed to be wrapped up in his art collection. Davila went off after performing the introductions. Von Hombergk and Valenti, chatting, moved toward the hotel Grill Room.

A hand was laid on von Hombergk's arm as he started to follow Valenti down the entrance steps. "Good evening, Signor Cotoni," a smooth voice was saying. "Cotoni" was the name von Hombergk had used on his forged passport.

His heart almost stopped, but he turned with a perfectly blank countenance, and looked into the face of the man who had spoken. It was the reporter who had eyed him on the train from Milan, who had peered over his shoulder at his passport!

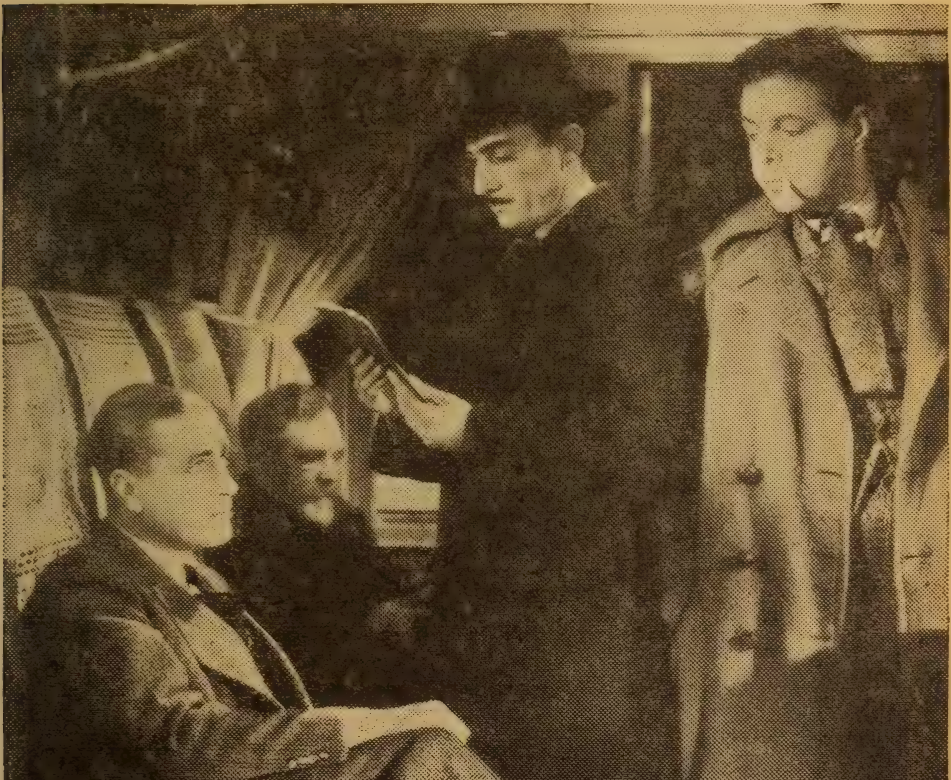
"I beg your pardon?"

The other smirked. "Well, well, the Palace Grill Room is a strange place to sell alarm clocks in!" He was taking in von Hombergk's impeccable evening attire.

The Austrian spy shrugged coldly. "I regret we have not had the pleasure——" he murmured. He moved off to follow Valenti, who had noticed nothing. But a frown stayed between his eyes; that reporter might make trouble if he speculated too much!

SEATED across from Valenti at a table on the dais, von Hombergk sipped wine and talked of art. He could no longer see the reporter and was wondering how the conversation could be brought around to Colonel Romanelli, when fortune suddenly smiled upon him.

Valenti touched his arm, gesturing toward a tall man in uniform whom a page



Von Hombergk's forged papers were accepted without question.

had just called and who was striding toward the telephones. "Hello! There's Colonel Romanelli! I'll get him over here later, you'll meet him. Most interesting chap."

Von Hombergk nodded blandly. "Yes?" he said, not showing his satisfaction. *Soon he would meet the man who knew the answer to the question which all Austria wanted to know!*

"One of my oldest friends," said Valenti pleasantly. "When he comes back from the phones——"

Had von Hombergk but known it, however, Romanelli was at that instant discussing him with the sly-faced newspaperman in the foyer of the grill. The latter, having done some hasty surmising, had sent a message to Romanelli, saying that he was wanted on the phone. He had intercepted him. "Yes!" the reporter was saying now, excitedly and with certainty. "I met him on the train—supposed to be a commercial traveler in a small way! Look at him! Lording it in the Palace Grill!"

"Are you sure it's the same man?"

"Oh, yes." There had already been mention of the five thousand lira reward. "There's something the matter with his right arm, I noticed it on the train and again just now—the way he holds it."

Colonel Romanelli frowned grimly. With a word or two more, he made for the telephones.

Marcella, in her house in Rome, answered the call. She blanched at Romanelli's first words after greeting.

"What! Here in Rome? . . . But how——?"

Her thoughts were in a turmoil. Michael, again! And again she was being called upon to betray him! Colonel Romanelli was telling her to come to the Palace Hotel; that he would stop by the table of the Conte Valenti and arrange it so that he would be invited for dinner. Marcella was to join them.

"Now, listen, Marchesa, if he is really our man, order champagne. If he is *not,* order wine. Do you understand? Champagne, yes! Wine, no!"

Marcella understood. Too well! She assured the Colonel and dropped the telephone wearily back into its cradle.

She wished she had not come back to Rome from Milan after the alarm about the Austrian spy had switched the center of activity. But she could not avoid this——

Her car put her down at the Palace a half hour later. Alone. She walked through the foyer, the cynosure of eyes, breath-taking in her evening gown, and descended slowly the steps to the grill.

She saw the three men at once—Romanelli, the Conte Valenti, whom she knew—and von Hombergk in the center. It was he, of course!

All rose as she approached. Valenti flashed white teeth in a smile of greeting. "Good evening, Marchesa." Von Hombergk was motionless until he was presented as Mister Van Marken. Then he bowed low, kissed her hand.

Marcella half closed her eyes as a chair was drawn out for her. When all were seated, von Hombergk wore a strange, taut expression on his face. Colonel Romanelli turned to Marcella with a smile.

"What will you drink, Marchesa? Champagne?"

Marcella breathed deeply.

"No, not champagne—just some wine, please."

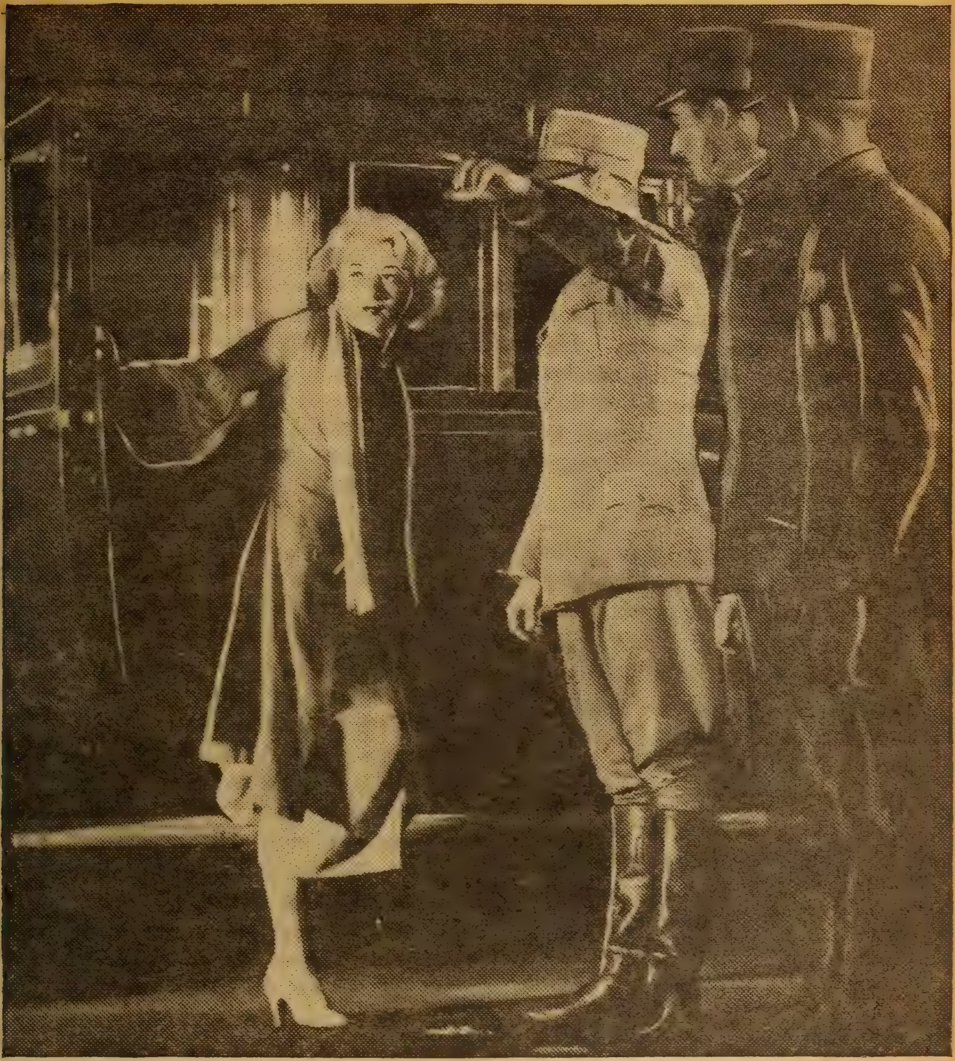
"You're quite sure?" Romanelli lifted an eyebrow.

"Quite sure—thank you."

THEY danced together a little later—von Hombergk as a stranger would; Marcella white of face. At a corner of the room:

"Michael!" she whispered. "I must see you—alone!"

Von Hombergk nodded just perceptibly. A glance backward showed that they were out of sight of Valenti's table.



Marcella, the Marchesa Galdi, arrives at Udine airport to head off Michael.

Colonel Romanelli, indeed, had gone for the moment, to give a piece of his mind to the reporter.

The Austrian spy took the Marchesa's arm. In a moment they were passing through the foyer to the street. Marcella pointed. Then they were in her limousine, rolling swiftly through the streets.

Nothing was said until they had reached her house, for each was engrossed. For that reason neither was aware of the taxi that followed them—in the back of which rode the sly-faced newspaperman who was not yet satisfied!

"Michael," began Marcella, facing him in her drawing room; "I begged you to leave Italy when you were at the hospitail. Why didn't you go?"

"How could I?" he countered. "I hadn't finished my job."

"But, don't you see?" she pleaded with

him. "It's useless to go on trying! Give it up and go back. Please!"

Von Hombergk shook his head. "You are asking an impossibility."

"Michael! You can't hope to succeed. You know it. The odds are too heavy against you. You don't suppose for one moment I came to the hotel to-night by chance, do you?"

Von Hombergk narrowed his eyes. He had, indeed, wondered about that—not forgetting the reporter. He had thought himself advancing nicely with his mission, with Romanelli at the table beside him, and he and Valenti talking art, when he had looked up to see, again, *her*.

"You mean——?"

She explained to him. And she went on: "I went to that hotel tonight with the intention of having you arrested!"

There was a pause. "And why didn't you?" he asked her finally.

She did not answer. Instead, she turned and moved away from him, her gown rustling. Von Hombergk followed her. "Why didn't you?" he insisted.

Marcella faced him. "Because——" she said, and then did not finish.

The Austrian took a step forward. The Marchesa, too, came closer. "Because——" she whispered again. And then she was in his arms.

A KNOCK sounded. It was Colonel Romanelli, making an unexpected call.

Breathlessly, Marcella tore herself away from von Hombergk's embrace, motioned him to hide between the curtain to the library. He obeyed, and she hurried to the door to admit Romanelli.

That the chief of the Italian Secret Service was perturbed was evident at once. He said he had just got some news. "Number 77 arrives from Vienna to-night!"

Marcella was startled. The Colonel went on to say that it was in connection with the impending Austrian attack.

"Where are we going to meet?" Marcella asked. "Here?"

One part of her mind was on the Colonel before her and his news; the other was with von Hombergk's tall figure, hiding behind that curtain, listening.

"I think not," Romanelli answered. He had already planned that, it appeared. The Conte Valenti was giving a late reception; it was Romanelli's idea to have 77 come there, where in the crowd he could pass unnoticed.

In the meantime, Marcella's chief desired that she make necessary arrangements for them to talk somewhere undisturbed in Valenti's house. "I'll be there"—he glanced at his watch—"at eleven o'clock."

Marcella managed to get herself in hand. Even while she knew that her lover was overhearing this—was learning that 77, the spy he had set out to identify, was coming to Rome tonight—she was looking at Colonel Romanelli, nodding: "I'll be there at ten-thirty."

She promised to make arrangements. A moment later the Colonel departed. Marcella turned and hurried to the curtain. Her hand flew to her throat. Michael was not there!

She ran across the library to where a rear door gave on a side porch of the house. From the porch, steps ran down to the narrow street.

The door was ajar. Distantly, a car was moving—not Romanelli's. The truth came over her as she stared into the chilly street.

Von Hombergk had indeed made a fast escape immediately upon hearing Romanelli's message. A part of him was back there with the beautiful woman who had already saved his life twice, but his resolution was too strong to be halted by anything!

He was planning swiftly as he sped back to his hotel suite in a taxicab. The Conte Valenti, before Romanelli had appeared at their table, had said something about Mister Van Marken's attending his reception that night. Von Hombergk had accepted.

It was after nine now. He would have an hour or more to change into more formal dress, reach Valenti's house, spy out the land and try to find the room where the secret conference with 77 would be held.

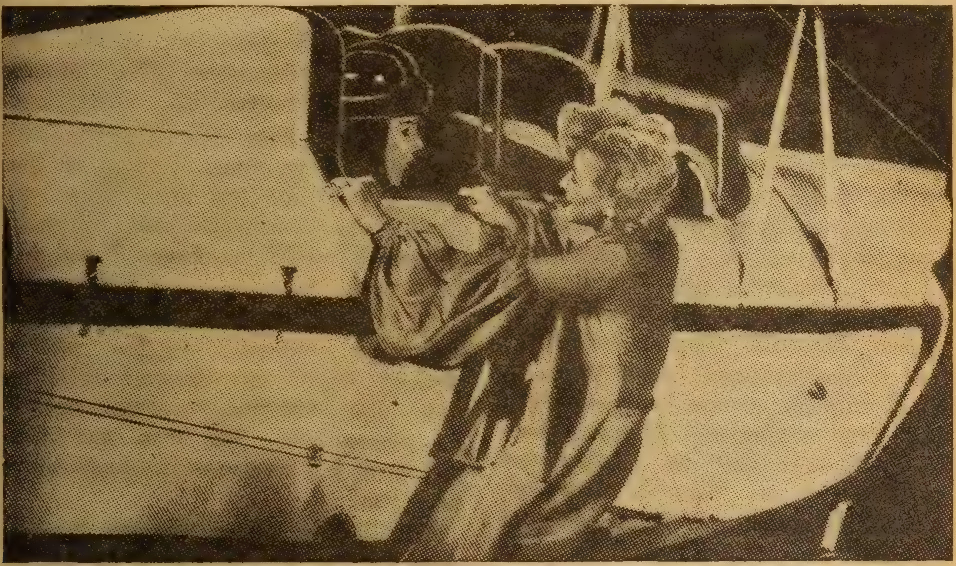
That von Hombergk would recognize the notorious 77 if and when he saw him, he was sure of from the start. The man—or woman—was necessarily some one of importance in Vienna to have got the information he did. And von Hombergk—still remembered, vividly, his days in high Viennese society.

The taxi reached the hotel, and the Austrian spy hurried up to his suit. He was struggling out of his coat, a slow business because of his wounded arm, when a voice sounded softly behind him. He spun around to see that same smooth-faced reporter, Bluentzlo!

THAT the man had come here to shake him down, von Hombergk divined at once. Fleetingly, he thought of putting a bullet through him from the automatic in his pocket. Instead, he bargained, it being clear now that Bluentzlo knew he was the wanted Austrian spy, and had decided to play his own game since Romanelli had scoffed him down.

"Five thousand lira," von Hombergk offered, naming the same amount as the reward.

It was not enough. The chap knew too much. They settled on fifteen thousand eventually, von Hombergk guaranteeing it on his "word of honor as a gentleman." Bluentzlo promised silence on his "word of honor as a journalist."



She held on with the fury of a tigress! Hysterically, she cried, "No! I won't let you go!"

That done, the reporter bowed his oily figure out, after intimating that—who knew?—he might be of some service to von Hombergk in the future. And if the Austrian should ever need him, he could find him at Giovanni's Café, in the Via Appia.

Von Hombergk scowled at the closed door, then got busy changing his clothes. The man did not concern him, provided he kept silent.

An hour later, von Hombergk passed through the portals of the Conte Valenti's palatial home, and after greetings were over, made his way to the gallery above the huge ballroom.

From here he could watch the floor, where a ballet was to be performed, could see Marcella and Romanelli the moment they left the throng for their secret conference with 77, somewhere in the house.

The place was jammed with people—officers, diplomats, ladies in evening gowns displaying white shoulders. A tension crept over the Austrian as he realized that he was near the end of his job. Once having identified 77, he could return to his homeland, freed of his undeserved stigma!

His thoughts broke off. Marcella, the Marchesa Galdi, had just come in down below, and even in that press of beautiful women, she stood out. That much von Hombergk realized before his start of surprise at seeing who was her escort.

It was Bluntzili! The man who had planted the gun-emplacement plans in Von Hombergk's rooms two years ago!

The pair went up the staircase, down the opposite gallery and disappeared through a door. Shortly afterward, earlier than he had anticipated, Colonel Romanelli turned up and went the same way.

Von Hombergk slipped from the crowd about him, crossed to the opposite gallery and found an adjoining room.

WHAT followed in the next half hour doomed von Hombergk to disappointment.

Number 77 had not been able to come!

Bluntzili himself, making the report, said that he had scarcely managed to escape Austria with a whole skin. Austrian Headquarters were on the alert; orders were being countermanded at the last moment in order to block the work of 77, and it was unsafe for the valuable spy to try to get out.

Instead, Captain Valdo, a picked pilot, was to go by automobile to Udine that night, get instructions, and then take off in a captured Austrian plane, bound for the Austrian frontier. There, at a chosen spot, the aviator would contact 77 personally, and get from him exact details of the new Austrian offensive!

Von Hombergk, listening to this from an outer gallery where he had crept, peered in at the faces of Romanelli, Bluntzili and Marcella. As he spied upon them, he formulated a plan—his only chance now of coming face to face with 77.

It was nothing less than to take the place of that Italian crack pilot who was to fly from Udine tonight!

He did not know that Marcella had seen him as he crouched there on the gallery, and for the third time had chosen between love and duty. Even if he had, it would not have affected his plans now.

At the café on the Via Appia, von Hombergk, noticeable in his evening clothes, found the reporter drinking wine. It did not take him long to broach his proposition. The man was completely at his service—for twenty thousand lira!

Immediately afterward, the two of them sped for the quarters of the Italian Royal Air Force, stopping only long enough at a secret place for von Hombergk to change his garb for the uniform of an Italian private.

They pulled up before the mess hall of the air force in their rented car. It was after eleven o'clock. As von Hombergk had understood it, Captain Valdo's orders were to leave for Udine shortly before midnight.

Getting out, the slyly competent newspaperman, gave the Austrian spy a smirk of assurance, and entered the building. Von Hombergk slid from behind the wheel, paced up and down as a chauffeur might.

The notorious spy and traitor snarled: "This is indeed a triumph for you!"

Silhouettes passed a window near by. He heard the reporter's voice:

"Secret Service, Capitano Valdo. I have orders to take you to Udine at once."

Another voice—that of the aviator—protested that it was not yet time.

"I'm sorry, Signor Capitano Valdo, but my orders are to take you at once. I have a car waiting."

"Very well."

Von Hombergk smiled grimly, went back to the car and got behind the wheel. Presently the two came out. They started off.

MARCELLA looked strangely at the Palace Hotel clerk. "Is there no message?"

"No, Marchesa."

She was pale and breathing quickly, for she had hurried here. The clerk volunteered the information that Conte Valenti had telephoned about Mister Van Marken, wondering why he had precipitately abandoned his art galleries. Marcella nodded. She was trying to think, think fast, and decide what von Hombergk would do after hearing the conference—how he would go on with his campaign against 77.

She thought of Captain Valdo—and suddenly she knew the answer! Michael would try to lure him out, take his place, go to Udine himself and fly the plane that would meet 77!

The thought sent her hurrying back to her car, but not before she had reached Conte Valenti on the telephone and asked a question that had troubled her since morning: how had the Conte met Mister Van Marken?

Valenti answered, of course, through Davila, the art dealer. Marcella lost no time in telephoning Romanelli, suggesting that Davila be placed under arrest, and his house searched.

She had saved Michael, but she could not save his accomplices. Nor, for that matter, could she countenance what Michael was doing now. His success would mean the death of thousands of Italians!

"To Udine as fast as you can!" she ordered her chauffeur, for now she was decided. She had to stop Michael!

Von Hombergk, at that moment, was donning the uniform of Captain Valdo in a patch of woods near an inn on the road between Rome and Udine. Valdo had been disposed of, was lying in a drugged stupor up in that inn. The reporter was waiting at the wheel.

They were off again immediately, speeding through the night, not knowing that twenty miles or so behind them a limousine bearing Marchesa Galdi was hot in pursuit!

At last the lights of Udine showed ahead. The reporter made for the hotel of the Italian Secret Service agent whom Valdo was to see before taking off, to get final instructions. Von Hombergk, clad now as an Italian pilot and carrying Valdo's papers, hurried into the hotel. He was directed upstairs.

A man opened the door. Von Hombergk froze; it was Bluntzili, come on ahead to direct the exploit!

Keeping his face lowered, in shadow, the Austrian spy entered the room. He was given his orders by the man who had ruined him two years before! He was to fly to the section between Laybeck and Krainberg. Three kilometres west of Zieland, he was to land near a railway line. A half mile up the road Number 77 would be waiting, and the password was "Roma, 77."

From 77, he was to get a sealed envelope which he was to bring back at all costs.

Von Hombergk nodded, face still lowered. Bluntzili indicated an Austrian uniform over a chair, told him to change to it, then strolled from the room. Von Hombergk made the change, was about to leave, when he saw the other's face staring at him in a mirror! He knew he was recognized!

There was but one thing to do—and von Hombergk did it! He left the room seconds later. Bluntzili lay dying on the floor, a bullet in his heart!

THE spy and traitor raced to the airdrome. The captured Austrian ship, reserved for Captain Valdo was warmed up and ready. Von Hombergk parted curtly with the reporter and jogged across the field to the plane. He was about to climb in when a cry from behind brought him around.

Marcella!

She ran up to him, clutched his arms. Her hair was loose and wild about her face. "Michael, you mustn't go!"

So stunned was he by her sudden appearance that, for the moment, he could not speak. She repeated her cry. Then he shook his head fiercely.

"Out of my way!" he shouted. "Nothing can stop me now!" He swung to the cockpit.

She clasped him, pled with him. Her screaming voice cut through the roar of the motor.

"Don't you see, Michael? All those soldiers lives—my own countrymen! I can't betray them! You shan't go! You won't go!"

Von Hombergk flung her off and leaped into the cockpit. Marcella threw herself at the fuselage and hung there. The Austrian gave the engine a burst, then cut it as he saw her there.

"Let go—you'll kill yourself—let go!"

She held on with the fury of a tigress! Hysterically, she cried at him: "No—no—I won't let you go!"

Sensing trouble, a crowd of mechanics from the hangars were running toward the plane. Von Hombergk looked back.

Emotions racked his face. To wait longer would be suicide! To take off now——

"Marcella, for pity's sake, let go!"

"No! No! No! I won't!"

Again, he looked back at the approaching men. He opened the throttle a quarter.

The Austrian plane started taxiing slowly up the field, with the men rushing after and shouting. And Marcella still clung to the fuselage!

Von Hombergk's face was a terrible thing. He opened the throttle further and the plane gathered speed!

Flying now, her slippers scarcely touching the ground, Marcella still clung there wildly! Von Hombergk could not bring himself to look at her. Down went the throttle! The plane took off! The ground fell away!

Von Hombergk reached out with his right hand and grasped at Marcella's wrist, trying now to drag her into the plane. For an instant their eyes met. Then——

The ship lurched sickeningly! Marcella screamed once, piercingly. Her fingers lost their grip and—she vanished!

WHAT happened after that was only a blur to the Austrian ex-captain, who knew too well what he had done.

Searchlights caught him. Anti-aircraft guns fired upon him. Italian planes took after and chased him many miles. But he was hardly aware of any of these things. All he could see, all he could think of was a delicate, beautiful body hurtling and screaming through the midnight air!

At dawn he landed at the appointed spot and plodded up the road through snow to meet 77.

It was Captain Larco, the A. D. C. of Colonel von Waldmuller!

"Hombergk!" he cried.

Hombergk waved to the soldiers who had followed him. They put Larco under arrest. The notorious spy and traitor snarled: "This is indeed a truimph for you, Hombergk!"

Hombergk answered tonelessly: "A very bitter one, I assure you. It has cost too much!"

His eyes could not see Larco, Spy 77, whom he had set out to get! They were filled with the sight of Marcella, falling to her death from the plane.

With an effort, he drove that vision away. Now he was seeing a column of Austrian troops going up to the front, with him at their head.

Yes, he thought. That was all there was left to him now.

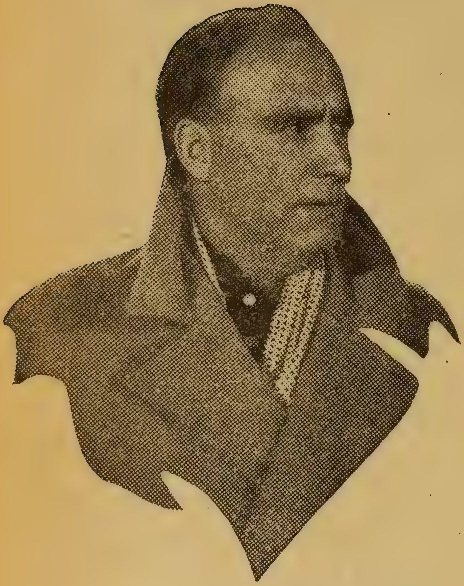
"THOROBREDS, ALL"

The exciting story of a man,
a horse, and a dog who know
only the law of the wild!

MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE NEXT MONTH

MUSS

The green shadow of death hung over the home of Paul Harding and all those in it!



Who threatened Paul Harding's life?

Where was Corinne's kidnappers' hide-out?

ALL "Tip" O'Neill was certain of was that the same person who had killed the dog and written the threatening notes to Paul Harding had kidnapped Corinne. And, probably, killed Jerome, the chauffeur.

There was no apparent reason for the colored boy's killing. He had been sober, studious, and without bad companions. His father, William, Harding's first chauffeur, could offer no explanation.

Tip yawned. He hadn't had much sleep the night before. In the middle of the night Paul Harding, white-faced, had wakened him with the news that Corinne, his pretty twenty-one-year-old stepdaughter, had been kidnapped. And ten minutes later, the police were loudly questioning both Paul and him on another mystery. They had picked up the body of Jerome, the chauffeur who had been driving Corinne. By mutual understand-

THE CAST

PRESTON FOSTER	"Tip" O'Neill
Robert Middlemass	Inspector Brock
Alan Mowbray	Paul Harding
Margaret Calahan	Amy Hutchins
Ralph Morgan	Jim Glenray
John Carroll	Gene Leland
Molly Lamont	Nancy Harding
Ward Bond Jack LaRue	Gangsters
Florine McKinney	Corinne

'EM UP!

Meet Mister Tippecanoe O'Neill private detective, who works with or without orders from his boss.

Why was this New York "mobbie" in town?

Was she jealous of her stepsister's lover?

ing, neither Paul nor Tip mentioned Corinne's abduction. They didn't want police interference in the ransom negotiations.

However, Tip wished that the police had picked up the two New York mobbies he had met on the station platform as he came into Lakewood the afternoon before. They had no good business out here—their business anywhere was never good!

In his violent career as a successful private detective, Tippecanoe O'Neill had encountered some peculiar circumstances. But this case, he thought as he roamed restlessly through the rooms of the big Harding house, offered one of the screwiest set-ups he had ever seen!

He yawned and scowled. It was four hours now since Paul Harding, Tip's host and employer, had driven away alone with two hundred thousand dollars in currency to be delivered as ran-

Directed by
Charles Vidor

Screenplay adapted from James Edward Grant's novel "The Green Shadow."

A fictionization of the Radio picture of the same title.

RKO Radio PICTURES

som for Corinne. Tip slouched in his chair and started over, for the hundredth time, the few things he really knew about the case.

HE had known Harding for years, and worked for him often, so he was not surprised when he got a wire summoning him to Harding's home. He *was* surprised, though, when he got there and found that Harding had not sent him the wire, and that the trouble involved was the shooting of Harding's dog—backed up by letters threatening Harding's life next.

It was fairly obvious that someone in the house had been responsible for shooting the dog and for writing the letters, for Harding had assured him that the dog had been shot with one of his own long-range rifles—he had found the spent shell in the driveway. After that, Tip had figured all he had to do was find out who in the household was an expert shot. But he had discovered, to his disgust, that everybody in the family was a crack shot.

Tip tabulated them in his mind: Corinne, Paul's stepdaughter, who was gone now; Nancy, Harding's real daughter; Amy Hutchins, Harding's personal secretary, a good-looking, pert and level-eyed young person; Jim Glenray, Nancy's uncle, a slim, esthetic-looking man whom Tip disliked instinctively because he did petit point embroidery in his spare time; and Gene Leland, a handsome, dark youth who was Corinne's fiancé.

Tip started to whistle abstractedly through his teeth as he thought of Leland. The last time he had been in the Harding home, five years before, Leland had been Nancy's boy friend. Nobody had yet seemed willing to offer him any explanation of how Leland became Corinne's property. But nobody had to explain to him that Nancy didn't like it!

Tip stretched and walked slowly down to the library.

Glenray was working quietly at his petit point frame, Leland paced nervously up and down, and as Tip entered, Nancy rose from the table where she was playing solitaire, with a hysterical cry: "I can't stand this! I wish father would come back!"

"He'll be here any minute now," her uncle soothed her.

Leland rushed across to Tip. "It's one o'clock, and he hasn't come back yet!" he cried, but Tip eyed him calmly.

"Well?" Leland shouted in exasperation. "What are you going to do? Don't just *stand* there! *Do* something!"

"Take it easy, Gene!" Amy Hutchins said quietly, entering the room softly behind him. Leland whirled on her.

"That's all I've heard for the last twenty-four hours!" he shrilled. " 'Take it easy, Gene! Take it easy!' I'm tired of it, do you hear me? Corinne isn't back yet, do you understand?"

Tip looked at him coolly. "Paul ought to be back any minute now," he said, "so will you people stop jumping around like a cage full of monkeys?"

At the window, Leland gave an excited yelp. "He's coming! Here's Paul now!"

He ran for the door, but Tip put out a restraining arm. "Relax, will you?" he urged.

IT was Tip and Tip alone, who met Paul Harding at the door. He pulled him into the trophy room, but Leland trooped in after them. Tip saw that his angry looks were wasted on Leland, so he turned to the millionaire, Harding.

"Well," he asked, "what happened?"

"Everything went off according to schedule," Harding said in an exhausted voice. "They picked up the money. Corinne hasn't shown up yet?"

"No!" Leland burst in frantically. "She hasn't! Don't stand there gaping! Where is she?"

Tip stepped between them. "Did you get a good look at the men?"

Paul turned his back on Leland. "I'll talk to you privately," he said meaningfully to Tip, and with a wild look Leland leaped for the telephone, calling frantically for the police department.

With a swift thrust of his shoulder, Tip knocked Leland away from the phone. "Never mind," he said laconically to the operator.

"You can't afford to lose your head in a case like this, Leland. There are a million and one answers to why she isn't back yet. They may be holding her until they put some distance between them and us. Or they may want to check that the money isn't marked too obviously. Let's play along for a while. They'll deliver!"

Leland wasn't convinced. "Why not call in the police?" he demanded.

"Because they'll want to catch the kidnappers and nothing else," Tip barked. "I'm trying, first, to get your girl back. After she's back

Did Jim Glenray know more than he told?

Was Amy more than a secretary to Paul Harding?

Why did he jilt Nancy Harding—or did he?

again, safe and sound, I don't care what happens. But, I'm telling you now, you call the cops on this case, and you'll never see her alive again! Now what do you want to do?"

Leland sat down, his hands, white-knuckled, gripping the arms of the chair. For a moment there was silence. Then, his lips motionless in his white face, he said:

"Ask Harding about Tony Spivali!"

Tip glanced up in surprise. He took a quick look at Harding. His back was still turned, rigid. "Again Leland's voice came between motionless lips: "Ask Harding about Tony Spivali!"

Harding turned from the window.

"I'll be back after awhile," he said.

"Check," Tip agreed casually. As the door closed, he turned upon Leland savagely. With one swift gesture he lifted the man by the shoulder and slammed him against the wall.

"Start talking!" he demanded. "You're in a spot! What pen did you do your time in?"

HE felt Leland go limp beneath his hand.

"Who told you that?" he breathed.

Tip shook him. "I don't want any guff! Where did you do your time?"

"Leavenworth," Leland murmured, broken. "But don't get off on the wrong foot——"

"How long?" Tip interrupted.

"Year and a day—tax evasion."

"Booze?"

"In a way. I was supplying sugar to the alky distillers."

Tip relaxed his hold. "Now would you please explain to a very dumb cop just how an ex-con comes to be accepted in the Paul Harding home!"

"Nancy introduced me," Leland said sullenly.

"Nancy? I *was* right after all."

Leland nodded. "I was introduced to her at a night club."

"What was the angle?"

"There wasn't any. She's a swell girl, but after I met Corinne it was different. I fell in love, then!" His white face twisted. "If anything happens to her," he whispered, "I'll scatter dead guys from the lake to the city limits!"

"Sure you will," Tip soothed him. "Have a smoke? What about Paul Harding and Tony Spivali?"

"He came to the house once and tried to see Harding. But he couldn't get by Amy. He's got a bad rep. Blackmail, divorce framing, fingering payrolls for stickups and the usual larceny that a guy like that goes in for."

"What's his racket?"

"He operates a gambling joint just outside of town."

Tip nodded. "Check. Now sit tight for a while. I'll look in on Spivali in the morning."

"Just a minute," Leland said curiously. "How did you know I did time?"

Tip grinned. "You spoke without moving your lips. Penitentiary stuff."

Leland shook his hand. "Dumb of me!" He sighed. "What are you going to do about Corinne?"

"We'll give them till this time tomorrow night. If she's not back then, we'll call in the police."

"I'll see you in the morning," Leland said, and left him.

THE sum total of Tip's success with Tony Spivali, next morning, was zero.

"Nix, O'Neill," was the rat-faced gambler's grinning ultimatum. "You pay and then I talk. Five grand. And I mean cash."

Tip eyed him coolly. "I don't carry five thousand dollars for pocket money. Isn't my word good?"

"No!"

Tip smiled faintly. "All right. I'll have it in an hour." He walked out of the place and down the street. At a plain-looking barber shop called "La Rosa" he went in. In the first chair lay a man with his face swathed in a hot towel. At the sound of the bell, three barbers came tumbling out of the back room.

"I want to see Luigi Tersiniani," Tip said.

"I don't know the name," the barber at the first chair said politely. "Does he live around here some place?"

Tip stared at him steadily. "I'll stick around here for a while," he announced. "If you should happen to make his acquaintance, tell him Tippecanoe O'Neill wants to see him."

The hot towel heaved, and a beaming face rose from the first chair.

"My fran'!" Luigi bellowed joyously, stretching out both arms. "Rocka-da-boat!"

"Saluta!" Tip grinned, and the little man threw both arms about him.

"I need a favor, Luigi," Tip told him.

Luigi's gesture was florid. "Command Luigi! *Comando! Viva mio amico,* Rocka-da-boat!"

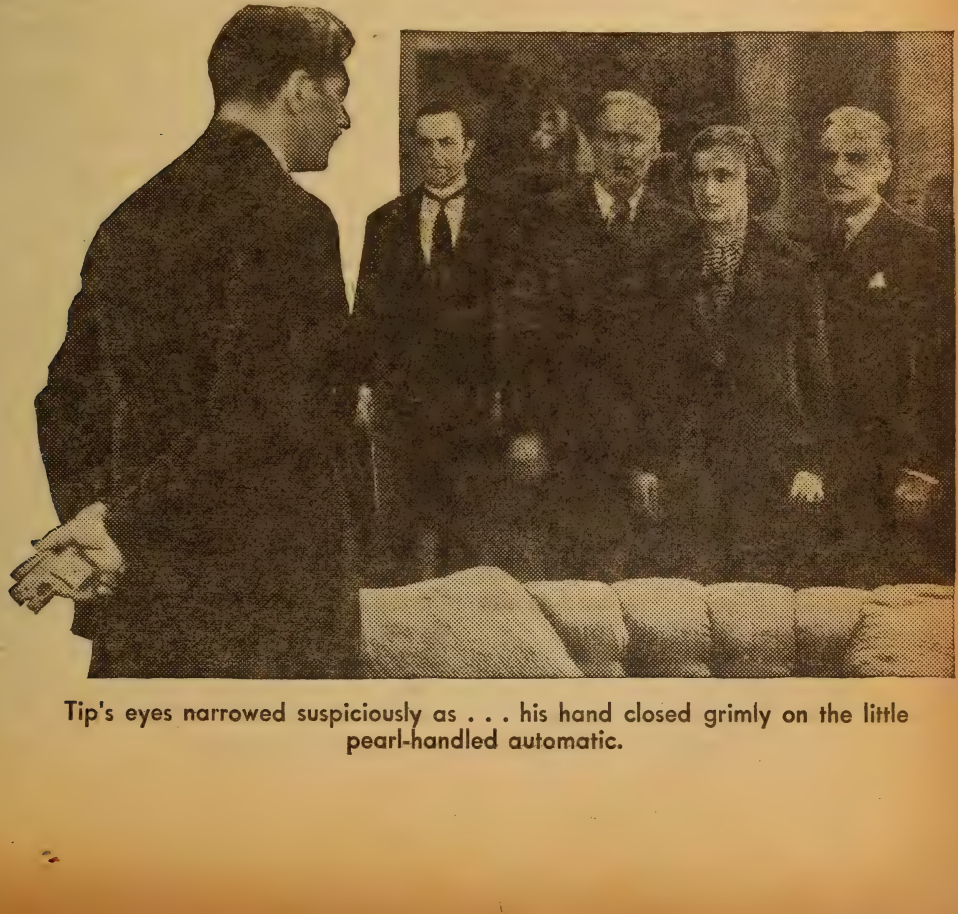
He poured wine into two lavishly inscribed shaving mugs, and they drank.

"Luigi," Tip said, "I asked a man some questions and he told me to peddle my fish." Luigi nodded. "I thought you might send him a message that it would be a favor to you if he talked to me."

"Rocka-da-boat," Luigi said grandly, "I will go with you myself, and he will be told!"

WHEN Tip came back from his second interview with Spivali, and a little side trip to the morgue to have a look at Jerome's body, he looked extremely thoughtful. He spent a while in the library, tapping out on Paul's typewriter a copy of the last ransom note received. The two were identical! There was no possible doubt that the ransom note had been written on that same machine!

He whistled through his teeth for a moment and then sent Amy to tell Wil-



Tip's eyes narrowed suspiciously as . . . his hand closed grimly on the little pearl-handled automatic.

liam, father of the dead boy, Jerome, that Tip wanted to see him.

When the old man came respectfully in, Tip got up and walked over to him abruptly.

"I just saw Spivali!" he snapped. "He spilled everything he knew. Where'd you get that dough?"

"What dough?" William said bewilderedly.

"Don't give me any of that guff," Tip snarled. "Talk and talk fast. Who gave you that dough and told you to hire a couple of thugs? Come out with it?"

"I don't know nothin', sir," William stammered.

"You'd better know a lot!" Tip threatened. "Your boy's been killed! Miss Harding's been kidnapped! Mister Harding's life's been threatened! I swear, if you don't open up I'll put you behind bars for the rest of your life."

Fear replaced indecision in William's face. "It wasn't my idea," he murmured. "I had nothin' to do with it."

"Whose idea was it?" Tip's voice was implacable.

"I been wantin' to talk about it ever since Jerome was killed," William quavered. "It's been preying on my mind. I didn't do nothin'. I was only carryin' out orders. I been with this family a powerful long time. They been awfully good to me and my son. But when he got killed, that was different!"

He choked, and went on with difficulty. "I got to tell you, Mister O'Neill! I got to make a clean breast of it! Then maybe, some day, my boy will forgive me!"

Behind Tip, the hall door opened softly. A hand came through and leveled.

"It was three weeks ago to-day," William faltered. "The butler came to me and said Miss——"

A revolver cracked twice!

WILLIAM started sharply as the first bullet caught him in the neck. Tip ducked to the floor and the second shot crashed harmlessly. A gun thudded on the thick rug. The door closed. Tip hurled himself across the room, but the door was bolted. He tried the one to the library. It, too, was locked.

He leaned over William. He was dead, a clean little hole through his neck. Tip's face tightened as he picked up the gun—the same little pearl-handled automatic he had seen in Amy Hutchins' bag the day before.

The phone started ringing, and Tip got from his knees to answer it.

"Harding?" said a harsh voice. "Listen, do you want the girl?"

"Yes," Tip said.

"Well, here's how you can get her. Fifty grand."

"Weren't you satisfied with what you got last night?" Tip asked through his teeth.

"Do you want the girl, or shall we toss her in the lake?"

"Sure, we want her," Tip said quietly, "but this time we want delivery."

"Will you pay up tomorrow night?"

"Send us a note with the girl's writing," Tip said. "Then you lay down the rules and I'll lay down the money."

Sudden suspicion sounded in the other man's voice. "This ain't Harding!"

There was a pounding on the door, loud voices shouted. Tip covered the receiver with his hand and shouted, "Get a key! The door's locked!"

Then into the phone he said "This is Tip O'Neill. I'm handling the thing for Mister Harding."

"You'll get the girl," the voice growled, and Tip hung up, as Amy, Leland, Paul and the butler tumbled through the door and gathered around to stare in horror at William's crumpled body. Tip's eyes narrowed suspiciously as he looked them slowly over, and his hand closed grimly on the little pearl-handled automatic.

TIP had not wanted to call in the police, but a murder wasn't a kidnapping. He knew better than to try to sit on *this* volcano alone.

"You didn't play fair when you held out on me about Corinne," Inspector Brock of the local police told Tip resentfully. "You should have called me in the minute you knew she was missing! Everything hinges on her kidnapping."

"Well, I've called you in now, and I've told you all. We both think it's an inside job. I've got a line on everybody —even the girls."

Brock frowned in puzzlement. "Jeepers, what are we going to do now?"

"You might as well let me play out my hand. We've nothing to lose. Let me deliver the fifty thousand tonight and see if that brings the girl back."

"All right." Brock climbed into his car. "I'll be waiting here tonight when you get back. But if that girl doesn't show up within a few hours, I'm going to blow the lid off the case! It can't stay covered any longer!"

Tip walked thoughtfully back into the house. It was almost time for him to go.

Like a flash, Tip dipped into his coat pockets and brought out two guns.

He was startled when he saw Paul waiting for him. The man was suddenly haggard, aged.

"I borrowed the money from Leland," he said as he handed the bag to Tip. "I didn't count it."

"Pressed for cash?" Tip inquired.

Paul smiled painfully. "Not quite as casual as that, old boy. I'm broke."

Tip stared at him in amazement. "You? Broke?"

"That shouldn't astonish you," Paul said wearily. "After all, we've all suffered reverses. Why, if it wasn't for Nancy, I couldn't have raised the two hundred thousand."

Tip looked at him narrowly. "What did she have to do with it?"

"Nancy has a trust fund left her by her mother," Paul said. "When she learned about the trouble, the dear child turned every penny over to me!"

"When I lay my hands on those hoodlums——" Tip muttered.

Paul put his head down on his arms. "Bring Corinne back," he said. "That's all that matters."

Tip patted him comfortingly, and walked out. Leland, wild-eyed, rushed past him into the room where Paul sat, and Tip shrugged.

"I was just looking for you, boss." "Red" Cable, his assistant, met him in the hall. "It's 11:30—it's time."

Tip nodded. Red helped him into his coat. "I'll follow you until you get out of town and stop," he said. "If there are any coppers trailing you I'll block them off."

"Check!" Tip said, and turned as Paul Harding called him.

"You don't have to go, Tip," Harding said wearily. "Gene is going to make the delivery."

"No," Tip said emphatically, and Paul's pale face blazed with sudden anger.

"You heard him, O'Neill," Gene Leland said nervously. "Give me the money."

"Do as you're told," Harding said roughly. "Don't forget you're a paid employee, Tip."

Tip's eyes narrowed, his face hardened. "Before that, I'm a copper with my fingers on the tail end of a big case!" he snapped. "I'm not trusting my case to a hare-brained kid to bust up! Look at him! He's half crazy. Five will get you eight he's got a gun in his pocket!"

Leland lunged for the bag in Tip's hand. Red caught him with a sharp glancing blow that bounced him back against the steps. Like a flash, Tip dipped into his coat pockets.

"D'you see?" he said, and brought out two guns.

"I see that you and I are through!" Harding shouted furiously. Tip looked at him blank-faced for a moment, then shrugged and went out.

WHEN he got back, Brock was at the house, and everyone was waiting tensely. It was almost dawn, and Tip went to wash and get himself a drink. He was tired, and puzzled.

"This interminable waiting!" Paul exclaimed irritably. "What did O'Neill have to say?"

"Everything went off according to schedule," Brock assured him. "He delivered the dough and they promised that Corinne would be back here unharmed before morning."

Even as he said it, there was the sound of a car in the driveway, and Paul's face lighted as he ran for the door.

From his bedroom window, Tip stood and watched as Corinne, looking tired and worn, got out of her car and fell into Paul's arms. He kissed her, and Tip frowned. The rest of the family came piling excitedly out, and Paul relinquished Corinne to Leland.

Still frowning, Tip put on his tie and knotted it absently.

When he got down to the library, Brock was questioning Corinne.

"Two hundred grand! We never saw no part of that dough!"

"Want to ask any questions?" he asked Tip.

"No," Tip said glumly, "but you'd better get out a dragnet for the two mobbies I described to you the first day I got in town. Those are the thugs that pulled the trick. They also killed Jerome."

"So far, so good," Brock admitted. "Now maybe you can tell us who killed William."

Tip stared at him in surprise. "Don't you know who killed William? I thought everybody knew—the same man who killed Paul's dog."

Brock scowled savagely. "I don't like your comedy."

Tip smiled sweetly. "I'm not kidding. The same person did both jobs. Killing the dog was just one of those trick complications all amateur criminals like to introduce. This particular criminal happens to be right in this room!"

He stared slowly around at the weary, haggard or expectant faces.

The butler opened the door, and Tony Spivali, looking as if he had been dragged out of bed, walked into the room.

"Mister Tersiniani told me to come over here in a hurry," he explained to Tip.

"What's the idea?" Brock demanded.

"Just in case of emergency," Tip smiled.

"When you get through with your smart chatter, I'd like to hear some facts," Brock growled.

Tips face sobered. "Very well, the facts are these," he said. "William once had to deliver a check for thirty-five hundred bucks to this hoodlum here, who, as you know, runs a gambling joint. The check was signed by Glenray. Nothing unusual about that, is there? But this was the beginning of a beautiful friendship and one day William offered Spivali twenty-five hundred for a couple of mobbies to pull a job for him."

"Do you know anything about this, Glenray?" Brock interrupted.

Glenray shook his head. "It sounds very interesting. But I never saw the man in my life."

Spivali leaped to his feet. "That ain't Glenray," he said. "That's him over there!" he pointed to Harding.

Harding smiled. "Of course, Glenray made out the check for me. He's my fiscal agent—signs all the checks over twenty-five hundred dollars. I've won and lost large sums at Spivali's club. But I'm unable to account for William's proposal. In fact I find it hard to believe Mister Spivali's story!"

BROCK turned to Tip. "What did you find out?"

"Spivali took the dough, and then double-crossed William, so William must have hired a couple of hoodlums from New York. He was an upstanding guy, and he'd been with this family a good many years. He would have done anything they told him to—in fact, he did—but when they killed his son, Jerome, he wanted to wash his hands of the whole rotten mess. He was just about to unburden himself to me when he was shot, and I was stymied."

"That's swell," Brock said disgustedly. "That's where I came in."

The door to the trophy room opened, and Red Cable stuck his head in. He caught Tip's eye and motioned him out. In the hall stood two battered mobsters, hand-cuffed together. Red carried a single suitcase.

"Here they are, boss," Red said proudly. "Dough and all! I waited at the station until the Midnight Express came in, and sure enough these lugs tried to slip by me."

Tip turned in triumph. "Ladies and gents," he announced, "the kidnappers!"

Brock looked them over sourly. "So you boys thought you could pull a stunt like this in Lakeside and get away with it?"

"We didn't pull any stunts!" one of the men protested through bruised lips. "We were hired to look after the lady—that's all."

"Who hired you to kill Jerome?" Brock snapped.

"Jerome?"

"Yes, the chauffeur who was driving the car when you picked up the lady."

"We didn't kill him!" the mobbie protested loudly. "Harding's chauffeur, William, hired us to pick up the girl and keep her under cover as long as she wanted to stay. We thought he was driving her car when we pulled it, but it must've been this other guy. Whoever he was, he wasn't in on the game and he put up a fight so we had to throw him out. We didn't know he was croaked!"

"Do you recognize these hoodlums?" Brock asked Corinne.

She looked them over carefully, coolly. "Why, yes, those are the men."

"We caught them with the money," Brock told her. "They claim William hired them to pick you up and that you went along willingly."

The girl smiled derisively. "How utterly fantastic!" she scoffed. "Maybe they can explain what they were doing with the money."

Brock smiled at her reassuringly and led the two, together with Tip, into the trophy room. There, they checked the ransom money. The last payment of fifty thousand dollars was almost intact.

"I wish I knew what became of that first two hundred thousand dollars?" Tip muttered, and Brock started.

"Jeepers!" he exclaimed. "I almost forgot about that. What did you boys do with all that money?"

"Two hundred grand!" said one of "the boys" in amazement. "Honest chief—we're on the level—we never saw no part of that dough! The fifty grand was all—and that was the dame's idea. It was supposed to be a three-way split, but we double-crossed her figuring she'd be afraid to make a squawk. We didn't see any other dough!"

"HARDING delivered that first ransom, didn't he?" Brock asked, later.

"Check!" Tip muttered, but hardly paid attention as Paul denied having seen the men, and offered to pay a reward for the return of the first ransom. Amy, seeing Tip's distraught face, touched his arm sympathetically, and he bent down and kissed her, absently, lightly.

"That's what I'd call a gentle, fatherly kiss!" she muttered, and was surprised to have Tip snatch her in his arms.

Red Cable, Tip's right-hand man.

"That's right!" he shouted. "That's what it was! A fatherly kiss!"

He pulled her close and kissed her again, hard.

"Nothing fatherly about that, was there?" he demanded as she shook him off. Then as she stared at him in bewilderment, he whirled to face the others.

"It's been sticking in my craw for the last couple of hours," he said excitedly. "When I saw Paul kiss Corinne tonight when she got back, I knew there was something there if I could only put my finger on it. He didn't kiss her like a father! He kissed her like a sweetheart. They're in this together, and here's how it was done——"

Paul stood up, shaking with fury. "I've taken a lot from you, O'Neill," he grated, "but this is more than I can stand! You're through. If you want me, Brock, you'll find me upstairs."

"Can't you see it?" Tip demanded of Brock as Paul walked out. "He's in love with Corinne. That's why he tried to get Leland to deliver the fifty thousand dollars. He figured Leland was crazy enough to start a fight and would probably get killed."

"Go on!" Brock scoffed. "What's the sense of his having Corinne abducted so he could pay himself his own two hundred grand?"

"It wasn't his two hundred thousand," Tip explained. "He hasn't got two hundred grand. He hasn't got a dime. He's broke. He got that money from Nancy. He's got it stored away somewhere, now. and when this thing dies down you can name any odds that those two run off to Europe!"

Brock shook his head stubbornly. "Where's your proof?"

"Proof! That's it! That's all I need." He strode up and down. Suddenly he whooped.

"Brock! Who gave you the list of serial numbers of the money he delivered? The first money—the two hundred thousand? Harding or the bank?"

"Why—why—Harding did." Brock fished a paper from his pockets. "He said it was a copy of the bank's list."

"Just what I figured!" Tip raved. "Now, if he never delivered that dough—if he hid it, to use it later, would he give you the right list? No! He'd give you a phony! So——"

RELUCTANTLY, Brock sat down at the telephone and called the bank. Tip and Amy leaned over his shoulder. As Brock's face lengthened and his pencil started recording numbers totally different from those on his sheet, Tip grabbed Amy's hands with a wild yell.

"See! What did I tell you?" he shouted, but Brock was halfway across the room.

"Get Harding!" he called.

At the foot of the steps in the driveway, Paul Harding paused with his arm about Corinne's shoulders.

"What in the devil made you hold out for that extra fifty thousand dollars I'll never know," he marvelled.

She smiled up at him, and malice brightened her eyes. "Forgive me, Paul," she murmured, "but I just couldn't resist the temptation to let Leland pay for our honeymoon! I thought I owed it to him!"

He grinned back at her, but looked up sharply at the sound of Brock's yell.

"Darling!" he said tensely. "I think they're on!"

They dashed for Corinne's car, and Paul swung it rapidly down the drive. In the hallway, Glenray heard them roar past, and watched Brock and Tip race out of the house after them.

With a slow smile, Glenray pulled a concealed knob—and set in motion the mechanism that opened and closed the gate at the end of the drive.

In the driveway, the sound of the crash as the speeding car struck the closing iron gate sent Amy shuddering into Tip's arms, and halted Brock in his tracks.

Tip's face was grim as he held the girl comfortingly. What a business! Paul Harding had been his friend—and a profitable account!

NEXT MONTH—

Movie action MAGAZINE presents

Wheeler & Woolsey

in

"SILLY-BILLIES"

(ALL ABOUT TWO AMATEUR DENTISTS IN THE WILD AND WOOLY WEST!)

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 3

THE MILKY WAY

A Paramount picture, with Harold Lloyd, Adolphe Menjou, William Gargan, and Lionel Stander.

Harold Lloyd is back again! America's Number 1 bashful boy is in with the side-splitting picture of the meek milkman who becomes a world's champion fighter—by accident! Harold Lloyd is a careful producer, planning each of his infrequent pictures for months before the cameras start turning. "The Milky Way" proves that he is right. By taking his time, he has surrounded himself with a perfect supporting cast, and has been able to build up every situation to hysterical heights.

To sum it all up—Harold Lloyd is back again!

THE GREAT ZIEGFELD

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, with William Powell, Myrna Loy, and Louise Rainer.

Here is a lavish film biography of the man who brought Broadway shows into the million-dollar class. Florenz Ziegfeld, dead these many years although the *Ziegfeld Follies* are still a yearly feature in New York City, is brought to life in all his extravagant fancy by William Powell. In the film, you see stars rising from obscurity to world-wide fame—stars you know today—Will Rogers, W. C. Fields, Eddie Cantor, Fannie Brice, Marilyn Miller. They're all there, and it's a genuine pleasure to watch them molded by the greatest star-maker of them all to develop into the personalities we love so well today.

A fine undertaking, well done, with plenty of entertainment for all.

ANYTHING GOES

A Paramount picture, with Bing Crosby, Ethel Merman, Charlie Ruggles, and Ida Lupino.

Paramount is turning out better and better musical pictures. Here's one, straight from a long and successful run on Broadway. (Remember "You're the Top!" and "I Get a Kick Out of You"?) It is changed very little except for some sparkling new tunes which have been added to the original hit numbers of the show. If you like Bing Crosby—if you "get a kick" out of Ethel Merman's hot songs—if you'd like to see Charlie Ruggles as Public Enemy No. 13, disguised as a clergyman—don't miss this one!

A shipload of mad and tuneful entertainment.

Continued on page 69

SUNSET of POWER

A lone waddie sets the affairs of the N-B ranch to rights—with searing lead and two flashing fists!

THE lone horseman rode slowly over the South Fork Trail that led into Dry Creek Canyon. His face was lean and bronzed, his body lithe and slim. His eyes were blue, brooding and seemed as cold and silent as he was himself.

As he rode into the canyon, his eyes darted nervously toward the rocks and scrubs. They saw nothing suspicious and he rode on, body leaning forward in the saddle with an ease that bespoke many years on the range.

High above him, some fifty yards in front, two men crawled through the brush on their stomachs, dragging rifles along with them. They moved silently and stealthily, snaking their way over the rocks and under the brush to escape detection from the trail below.

Suddenly they stopped, a few feet apart. The rider on the trail below was directly in front of them. The rifles came up to their shoulders, sights trained on the rider. Then one of the rifles roared! The rider stiffened in his saddle and then lunged forward, onto the neck of his horse!

The rifle in the hands of the other dry-gulcher did not spit fire. The first killer rose to his feet and spat on the ground in a contemptuous gesture. He turned to speak to his companion.

Then, suddenly, there came a streak of white flame from the six-gun of the man on the horse! The words froze in the dry-gulcher's throat. He clawed frantically at a small, dark spot over his heart. Then he tumbled down in a lifeless heap!

His companion snapped his rifle to his shoulder. His gun cracked in the wild stillness. From the horseman came an answering spurt of white flame. His leaden slug threw dust in the gunman's eyes. The second killer leaped out of the tall grass, turned, and fled into the thick underbrush!

The rider straightened up, his gray eyes searching the rocks and brush for other signs of life. Seeing none, he gave his pony rein and sent it over the trail for the N-B spread.

THE situation at the N-B ranch was a puzzling one, even to Cliff Lee, who had been there almost too short a time to understand any of its aspects.

First, the ranch was owned by "Old Man" Brannum—seventy years old, and still as ready with his six-shooter or bitter tongue as any of the young hands who worked for him.

The Old Man had a granddaughter, Ruth. A lovely, unspoiled girl whom he had brought on from a finishing school in the East. He had announced, just before she arrived, that she was to be treated coldly—even harshly—by every one on the ranch. He wasn't going to have *his* granddaughter pampered!

The only one who would be permitted to be at all civil to Ruth was the foreman of the N-B—Page Cothran. And Brannum made that concession only because

They found him dead, with a neat hole drilled through his heart.

THE CAST

BUCK JONES	Cliff Lee
Dorothy Dix	Ruth Brannum
Charles B. Middleton	"Old Man" Brannum
Donald Kirk	Page Cothran
Ben Corbett	"Red"
Charles King	Coley

Produced by Buck Jones
Directed by Ray Taylor
Story by J. E. Grinstead
Screenplay by Earl Snell

UNIVERSAL PRODUCTION

A fictionization of the Universal picture of the same title.

he was going to marry the two of them off!

This, of course, was greatly to Page's liking, since it meant that, some day, he would come into ownership of the entire N-B spread—if there was anything left by that time!

The truth of the matter was that the N-B cattle were rapidly disappearing. Constant, steady raiding had reduced the herds that roamed Brannum's land to a dangerously low ebb. Cliff had noticed that, by some curious coincidence, as Brannum's herds dwindled, the herds of a neighboring rancher, "Bud" Rolfe, increased. But he figured that was none of his business. He was too new a hand to go around, poking his nose into affairs which could lead only to trouble, gunplay, and certain death!

This policy of silence had dammed up many incidents in Cliff's mind. There was the time he had caught Injun Joe, one of Bud Rolfe's half-breeds, roping and hog-tying an N-B steer.

There was the time he had stumbled accidentally upon a hidden valley in which he saw several hundred head of cattle grazing, guarded by Rolfe men—and with Page Cothran overseeing their activity!

Cothran had long regarded Cliff with guarded suspicion. It seemed that every time Cliff found some clew linking the rustling, Bud Rolfe and Page Cothran together, Cothran was certain to change his duties so that he would be on a different section of the ranch, and consequently unable to pursue his quiet investigation.

Only the day before, Page Cothran had assigned Cliff to post-hole digging. And now, for the first time, he knew his life was in danger! He knew that Cothran would keep him at solitary work until he could be caught off his guard—by a singing, leaden angel of death!

AS Cliff swung easily out of his saddle at the N-B corral, he was greeted in mock derision by his pals, "Red" and Coley, who were loafing in the shadow of the broad board fence.

"Hi, Cliff! How's the post-hole sitchyashun in Twin Springs?"

"Workin' purty late, ain't you?"

Cliff motioned them to join him in a spot where they would find more privacy. Grinning, they followed him, but their smiles disappeared like frightened rabbits when they heard what he had to say.

"Fellows, somebody tried to dry-gulch me on the way in to-night!"

"No!"

"Who done it?"

"What happened?"

As briefly as he could, Cliff told them what had happened. When he had finished his recitation, sober-faced Red asked:

"Who was it, Cliff?"

He shook his head, slowly. "I don't know," he admitted. "The light was against me. All I saw was their figures—the one man when he stood up, and the other when he ran away. I wasn't going to stay around there and be a target any more, so I didn't stop to see what the man I shot looked like."

Coley scratched his round pate. "You've got your suspicions though?" he asked tentatively.

Cliff nodded. "I've got my suspicions," he said. But before he could elaborate on his remark, a stranger dashed in on a foam-flecked horse.

"Where's yore foreman?" he demanded. "I need help to bring my partner in. We was ridin' through Dry Creek Canyon, and somebody opened fire on us!"

Cliff Lee's eyes narrowed. "Who did the shootin'?" he asked.

"I don't know," the stranger replied. Before Cliff could question the man further, Page Cothran appeared on the scene.

For a flashing instant, Cliff thought he saw a look of recognition pass between the N-B foreman and the stranger. Then it was gone, and Cothran was once more his thin, brutal-faced self.

"What's going on?" he demanded.

The stranger explained that he wanted a man to help him out. Page brought his cold eyes to bear on Cliff.

"Cliff," he said, "you'd better go along. Hitch up the buckboard, and——"

Cliff and his friends were standing guard over the herd in Lone Wolf Pass.

Cliff's eyes met Coley's. The old, experienced hand understood what was in his pal's mind.

"I'll go along, too," he interrupted. "Two's better 'n one on a detail like this. And, if this man's a friend of the corpse, he won't feel much lendin' a hand."

"Good idea," Cliff smiled, and before Page could insist that Cliff go alone—and to his certain grave!—the two hands were readying the buckboard.

THERE was no doubt about it. Cliff recognized the spot where his would-be assassin had fallen. And it was on this same spot that they found this stranger's friend, dead with a neat hole drilled through his heart!

Afterwards, when he and Coley were discussing it in the N-B bunkhouse with Red, he admitted that he could not identify the man he had killed.

"His name was Mack," Coley supplied. "One of Bud Rolfe's men, he was."

"That's what I figured he'd be."

"Well," Red said with an attempt at lightness, "you don't have to worry about Mack any more!"

"There are others," Cliff rejoined.

"What I can't get over," Coley said, "was the cool way Page Cothran tried to ship you out there alone again, so that this other dry-gulcher could finish you off proper!"

"There's lots of things about that man I can't get over," Cliff agreed. "One of them's the way he's playing both ends against the middle. If he doesn't run all of the Old Man's cattle off the range, he'll marry Ruth and inherit them, anyway!" His tone made no secret of the fact that he would like to thwart Cothran's plans on both scores!

He rose to his feet, and as he did, the door opened. And, framed against the night, stood Page Cothran, himself!

"What you plannin' on doin' to-morrow, Cliff?" he asked with affected friendship.

"You're the boss," Cliff said. "You got me digging post holes."

"You're too good a man for that," Page said. "The Old Man got word from Bud Rolfe that our stock is mixed up with his. I want you to go down to Rolfe's ranch to-morrow morning and cut those cattle out. Take Red and Coley with you."

Page walked out of the bunkhouse. Cliff turned to his two friends and laughed strangely.

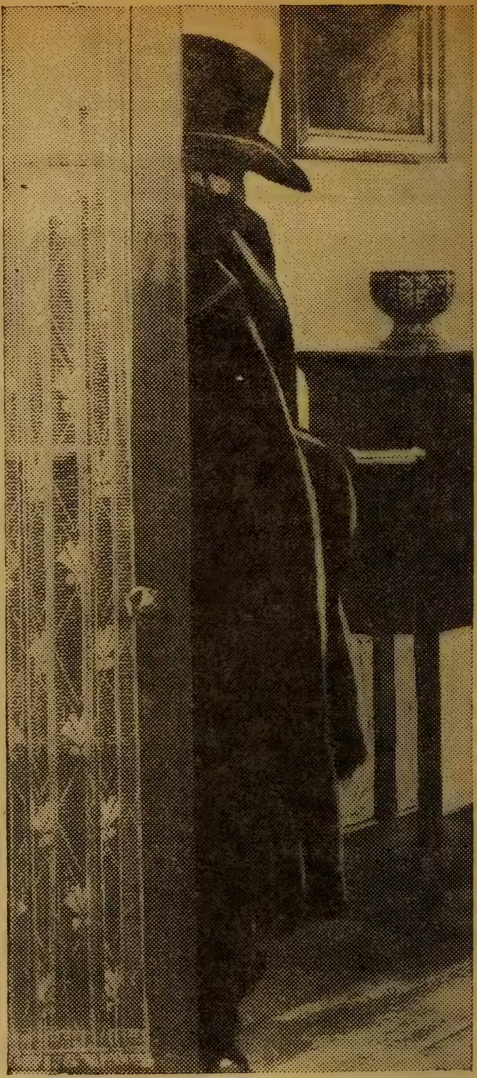
"Listen, you two," he said. "Page has shuffled the three of us into the same deck."

"What do you mean, the same deck?" Coley demanded.

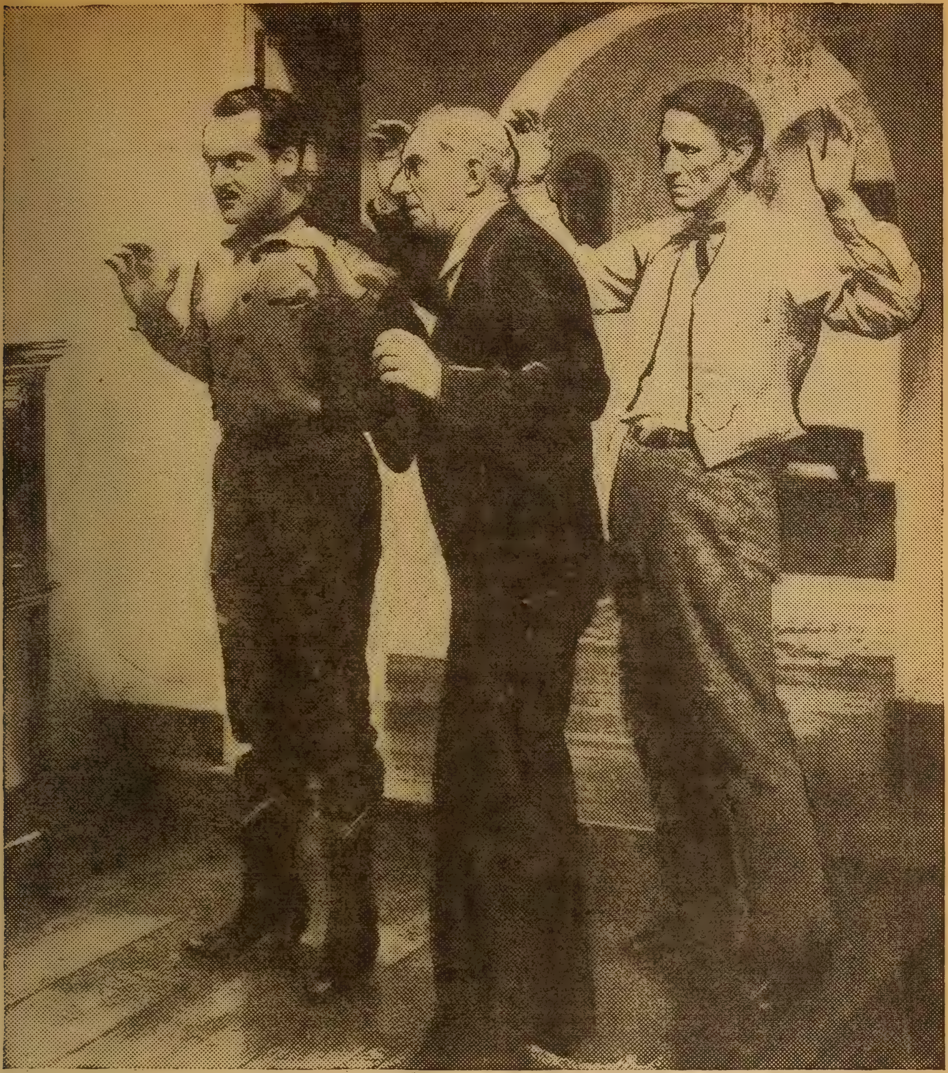
"Those dry-gulchers weren't interested in anybody but me," Cliff explained. "But now it looks like they're interested in all three of us. Probably they know that I've told you fellows about my suspicions, and they're afraid of you, too!"

"That sounds as crazy as everything else on this spread," Red growled. "Rolfe ain't fool enough to try to kill us while we're cuttin' cattle out of his herd."

"Rolfe ain't interested in havin' N-B stock out of his herd," Cliff said. "He went to too much trouble getting those steers there! There's something funny about this whole business—and we'll just have to go and find out!"



"The señors will be so kind as to hold up their hands!"



INSIDE the ranch house the solution to the mystery of why Page ordered the three friends to go to Bud Rolfe's place was being solved—only the solution was unknown to Cliff and his friends!

"Page!" Brannum roared. "A thousand cattle have disappeared or strayed from my herd. There's some answer to this and it's your job to find this answer."

"Give me a little time," Page replied, "and I'll find that answer. Them steers ain't just straying away. They are being rustled by men right on your ranch!"

"You mean that——" The Old Man's eyes narrowed menacingly.

"We don't know much about this Cliff Lee," Page said. "He came here from nowhere and has acted mighty suspicious since he came. He takes long trips and won't tell anybody where he is going. I'm following him to-morrow, and I think I'll get the answer to your missing cattle! Finding Lee with N-B steers would be pretty good proof, wouldn't it?"

"Plenty proof," Brannum answered, "to string him up without asking any questions!"

"That," said Page, "is just what I'm going to do if you give me a posse!"

The next day at noon, Cliff and Red and Coley had cut out over a hundred steers from Bud Rolfe's herd. They were standing guard over them in Lone Wolf Pass, waiting for Page to arrive—as he had said he would—with further orders. Lone Wolf Pass was a desolate region of small box canyons and barren rocks.

Cliff waited impatiently. He knew he and his pals had walked into a trap set by Page and Rolfe, but he didn't know what the trap was.

The answer came quickly, without warning. Over the rim of the pass, two horsemen appeared. On the other side two others came in sight. Then, from all sides, yelling cowboys swept down on the herd and the three men!

There were thirty or more of them, and in a swift glance, Cliff saw that most of them were men from town. Page was leading them. Guns came out of leather and, before Cliff and his friends could make a move, they were covered from all directions. The herd was sent up the pass in charge of five men and the three cronies were ordered to dismount and keep their hands high in the air.

"All right, boys!" Page shouted, "I guess we've caught the rustlers and it won't take us long to take care of them!"

"Why you dirty, low-down skunk!" Red yelled. "You sent us over to Rolfe's to——"

"Shut up, Red," Cliff interrupted dryly. "We've stepped into the trap and crying about it isn't going to help."

"We ain't needin' any more proof!" Page yelled to the posse. "Get the ropes and we'll string them up the way the Old Man said!"

"You ain't going to hang me until I've had my say!" Coley said doggedly. "You sent us over to cut these steers——"

"You're wastin' your breath, Coley," Cliff interrupted. "We stepped into the trap set by Page and Rolfe—and we knew we were going to step into something. But the trap isn't any good!"

WITH those last words Cliff moved. He was standing near Page, who was on his horse. Cliff's right hand went out, scooped under the stirrup of Page's saddle, and the next thing the posse knew Page was sprawling on the ground, his two six-guns falling from his hands!

With the speed of lightning, Cliff swooped up the guns, brought them up with a snap and yelled:

"Want to shoot it out?"

The posse stared at Cliff, but no man in the whole crowd started to throw lead. They all knew Cliff's reputation with guns. They knew they might get him, but before they did, some of them would die!

And the split second in which they hesitated brought Red and Coley to life. They leaped on their horses, turned around and started away from the posse. Cliff followed, still covering the posse by twisting in his saddle.

The posse brought to action by the fallen Page's shouts, a barrage of bullets fell around the three fleeing men. But in a flash they were over the rim of a canyon and headed for the badlands that lay behind the Lone Wolf Pass.

An hour later Cliff brought his horse to a stop in front of an isolated cabin hidden by rocks and shrubbery. The posse had long since been lost.

"We can get our breath here," Cliff said, jumping to the ground.

"Whoever built this cabin," Red said, "put it in a place where nobody would ever locate it."

"I found it by accident when I was riding through this country before getting the job with Brannum," Cliff replied. "It will give us a good hide-out."

"A hide-out?" Coley growled. "We can't spend the rest of our life here. I want to settle with that skunk Page and I'm going——"

"—to stay right here," Cliff put in. "There'll be five posses scouring the country for us. We won't have a chance with them. Page fixed it so we were found with N-B cattle and that's evidence we can't talk down."

"Hiding out," Coley said, "isn't going to do any good."

"Going on running away, won't, either," Cliff answered. "That means being hunted men and going down the hoot owl trail.

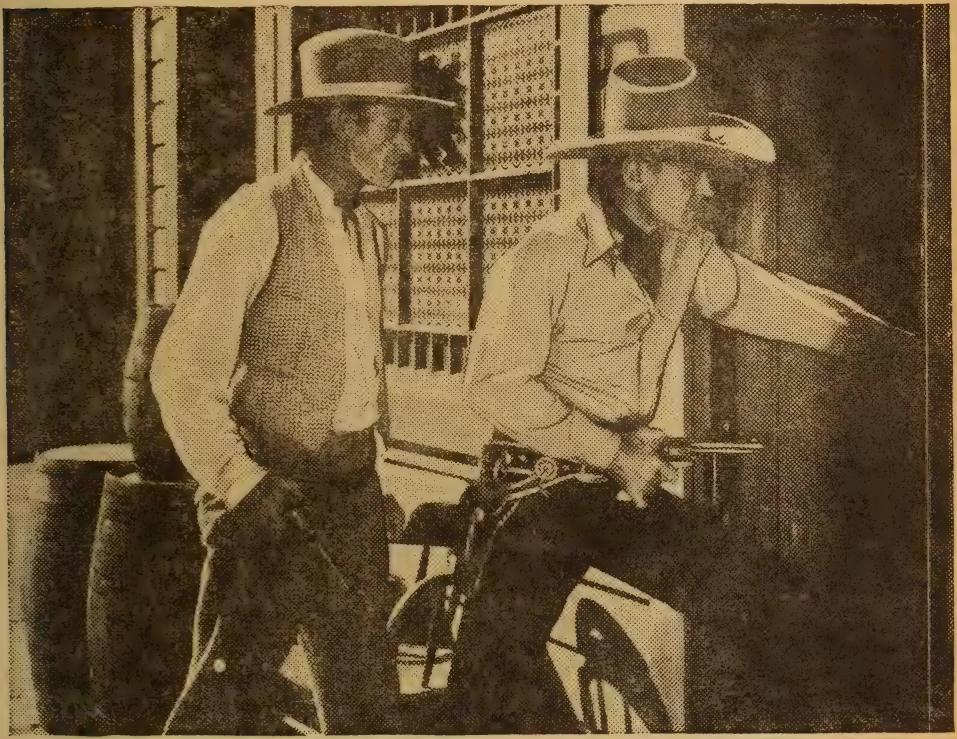
"But I got another plan that might work," he went on. "The trap Page set for us may work two ways. We've forced him to show his hand. We know now for sure he's working with Rolfe, and that's going to help! You two stay here. You may have company soon and take good care of *this* company!"

With that, Cliff swung on his horse and disappeared beyond the rocks. Red looked at Coley in amazement.

"I guess," he said after a while, "there ain't much for us to do but stay here!"

NIGHT had fallen when Cliff rode into the yard of the N-B ranch. But to those that saw him he was no longer Cliff Lee, the reckless cowhand who had come out of nowhere the month before. He was a tall Spaniard, wearing the tight-fitting jacket and the wide Mexican hat. His face was hidden beneath this hat.

The lights were burning brightly from the ranch house and from inside came the sound of excited voices. Two strange horses were standing at the hitch-



Together, they pushed through the swinging doors of the saloon.

ing rack. Cliff dismounted, sneaked up to a window and peered inside.

He saw three men standing there. One was Brannum, his face dark with an unpleasant scowl. Page stood at his side dressed in his finest and decidedly nervous. The third man Cliff recognized as the justice of peace from town.

A smile came to Cliff's lips. He knew too well what that scene meant. Old Man Brannum was carrying out his orders that his granddaughter marry Page!

But Ruth was nowhere to be seen. The old Mexican woman, Rosita, came into the room, her face twisted with fear and anger.

"Where is Ruth?" Brannum demanded. "Isn't she ready yet?"

Rosita mumbled something and Brannum thundered: "Go to her room and get her ready! It's harder to get that young female married than it is to brand a hundred steers!"

Rosita left the room. Cliff stood up, looked around quickly, and then went to the front door of the ranch house. He kicked the door open and entered the room, a six gun in each hand and a mask over his face!

"The señors will be so kind as to hold up their hands!" Cliff said in the soft voice of a Spaniard. "I hope there will be no difficulty. The señors have only to do as I direct."

The three raised their hands slowly. The face of Brannum turned red with fury, but the fury did not find expression in words.

"If you please," Cliff ordered, "you will march through that closet door. It is fortunate that the door is already opened. Step quickly, señors."

The three men stepped inside the closet. Cliff swung the door shut and locked it. Then with long strides, he was across the floor and into Ruth's room. She and Rosita gave a little cry as they saw him.

"Who are you?" Ruth demanded.

"I came from Señor Lee," Cliff replied. "Friends and horses are waiting up the trail. Come quickly."

Ruth and Rosita asked no more questions. Cliff saw in a glance that Ruth was already packed, as if she had planned to flee. The two women darted outside the house in front of Cliff and in a moment were lost in the darkness of the night!

SEVERAL hours later, Rosita, clinging desperately to the saddle horn, rode through the shrubbery and rocks that surrounded the hide-out Cliff had found in the badlands. Ruth astride another horse followed close behind. Red and Coley came to the door, guns in hand, but the voice of Rosita caused them to slip their guns back in their holsters.

"Sufferin' cats!" Red grunted. "I guess our company has arrived."

Back in the darkness that covered the N-B ranch and the cow town of Palo Alto, Brannum was leading a posse searching frantically for the mysterious Spaniard who had raided the ranch house single-handed.

"When you get this Spaniard," Page said to Brannum, "you'll likely get your cattle rustlers."

"Who cares anything about cows now?" Brannum roared. "I want Ruth back! I was an old fool, and——" His voice faded away.

"Cliff Lee bought a stock of grub from Chub's store several days ago," Page said weakly, after an awkward pause. "Looks like he was plannin' a hide-out."

"If you had any blood in your veins instead of water," Brannum growled, "you'd had him when you caught him with my cattle!"

Page flushed but said nothing.

The posse came to a narrow trail that led from Palo Alto. A shadow moved ahead of them.

Brannum yelled: "There he is! After him!"

The shadow disappeared as the posse

raced down the trail. Then a horse and rider came away from behind a large rock and back-trailed in the direction of Bud Rolfe's ranch. Half an hour later Cliff was riding into Palo Alto.

The posse scoured the country for the mysterious rider in vain. The mysterious rider had seemed to vanish completely! Brannum instructed Page to continue the search, and then rode toward Palo Alto to find out about the stock of grub Cliff had bought.

When he walked into Chub's store, the place was empty. He pounded his huge fist and yelled: "Hey, where is everybody?"

Chub came out of a back room and said: "I was just looking for you, Brannum. There's a man in the back room to see you."

Brannum stiffened and his eyes grew suspicious, but he walked into the rear room, his right hand hovering over his holster. He stopped suddenly, fingers closing around the butt of his gun.

Standing with his back to the wall, arms folded easily in front of him, was Cliff Lee!

"YOU won't need any gun, Brannum," Cliff said in even tones. "It'll pay you to behave for once and listen to what I've got to say!"

"Talking pretty big, aren't you—for a rustler?"

"That's baby talk," Cliff shot back. "Page knows I'm not the rustler of your cattle. And he knows who is!"

"See here!" Brannum bellowed. "You can't talk that way to me——"

"If I don't, you're going to be sorry for it all the rest of your life."

Brannum was licked, and he knew it.

"Where's Ruth?" he asked, anger leaving his voice.

"She's safe," Cliff answered. "But you

The old man looked up at him and smiled weakly. "Get Ruth . . . ."

are going to listen to a few things before I tell you where she is. Where is Page?"

"I reckon he might be at the Green Tree Saloon by now," Brannum said. "I left him to find you, but I guess he gave it up."

"I'm going after him," Cliff stated. "But I want you to stay until I get back."

"Stay, hell! I'm going, too!" Brannum growled.

As Cliff walked out of the door, the Old Man was at his side. Together, they walked down the main street and pushed through the swinging doors of the saloon. Page was at the bar surrounded by his men.

"I ain't blamin' Red and Coley," he was saying to his men. "They just followed Cliff Lee blindly. But where I come from they don't ask no questions of a sneaking rustler like Cliff! They shoot first——"

"Maybe you want to start shooting now!" Cliff's voice was cold and deadly.

Page swerved, his right hand going for his six-gun. His eyes flashed with fear as he saw Cliff standing within a few feet of him, his hand resting on the butt of his gun! The men with Page stood riveted to the floor at the sight of the man they had been hunting!

Behind the crowd appeared the face of Bud Rolfe. His right hand streaked for his gun. Cliff's steel left the holster. There was a terrific roar and Bud Rolfe sank to the floor!

And in the next second the barroom was filled with the roar of guns! Cliff leaped over the bar and crouched behind it. Page ducked behind a table. Above the din of exploding guns came the sound of shattered glass!

Bullets crashed into the bar. One clipped Cliff on the shoulder. Another took his hat off. His gun was sending a flame of death, aimed only for men he knew were henchmen of Page and Bud Rolfe!

But the force of numbers was too much for him. Men came crawling around the ends of the bar. Cliff leaped to his feet, sent two bullets at the hanging lamp. There was a dull explosion and the room was thrown into darkness.

Cliff was over the bar, lunging for the table where Page was hiding. His shoulders crashed against the table, splintering it! The force of the fall stunned him for a moment. He shook his head weakly. Someone was crawling away from him.

He lurched forward, his arms closing on Page's legs. The two men rolled over the floor in a snarling, fighting heap. A right caught Cliff on the side of the head, sending his senses in all directions. A blow hit him in the stomach, doubling him up.

But he struck out with his left, connected with Page's head! He heard Page groan, and, closing his arm around Page's legs, Cliff rose to his feet, carrying the kicking, cursing foreman with him!

OUT of the saloon he walked, Old Man Brannum still with him. Page's henchmen started to follow, but they were afraid to risk a shot for fear of hitting Page. They started to surround Cliff, but from the darkness came two forms.

"Just stay back, *hombres!*" the voice of Red said. "Cliff is having a little party and we're mighty curious to find out what its about."

Page's men backed away. They had had enough fighting and Red and Coley had the drop on them. Cliff stalked down the main street, Page over his shoulder, with the whole town awaking to witness the strange sight. Into Chub's store and the back room where Brannum locked the door behind them, Cliff walked carrying his load.

He threw Page on the floor and said to Brannum: "Now we're going to find out something about cattle rustlers!"

Page jumped to his feet, his face distorted with fury.

"Get him, Brannum!" he yelled. "He tried to kill me!"

"We'll get him, Page," Brannum said quietly, "when we've heard what he has to say about cattle rustling."

"He's the rustler!" Page yelled. "We caught him and his friends——"

"Bring Injun Joe in!" Cliff yelled to Chub, outside in the store.

Page looked at Cliff, his face going deathly pale.

"I once befriended Injun Joe," Cliff said to Page. "I caught him trying to hog-tie one of the N-B steers and I didn't kill him. He's superstitious, like all Indians.

"To-night I worked a little superstition on him. I did some talking in the dark at his hut on Bud Rolfe's ranch. I told him he'd better tell the truth—and he's here now ready to tell who was really behind the rustling of Brannum's cattle!"

Page looked at the door. He saw Injun Joe walk into the room; he wet his lips, and then turned. From his shirt a hidden gun came out. It roared once. Brannum staggered, clutching his side and went to the floor!

Cliff's gun jumped in his hand. Page's gun fell from his trembling fingers! And the next second Red and Coley came rushing into the room, grabbing Page's arms.

"It'd be a shame," Red said, "to kill this skunk and beat us out of a nice little hanging party!"

But Cliff didn't hear them. He was bending over Brannum. The old man looked up at him and smiled weakly.

"Get Ruth, Cliff," he said. "I want to tell her something——"

AN hour later Ruth entered the doctor's office. Her grandfather lay on a couch. His face was pale but he smiled at her.

"Cliff," he said, turning his gaze to the right, "I won't be able to ride for several months. You're foreman of my outfit and I want you to get on the job!"

Then he motioned Ruth nearer to him and slipped his arm around her.

"I've been terribly lonesome all the years you were gone," he said. "I wanted you more than anything in the world—but I wanted you to marry the right man. I guess I'm an old fool and have funny ways, but I know the best way to have you marry Cliff was to try to force you to marry some one you didn't want. Besides, I wanted to test Cliff to make sure I was right.

"At the same time I had to give Page plenty of rope to hang himself. I had to stop the rustling for your sake, Ruth, because you're going to get the ranch—you and Cliff. It was a scheme I had to work to save you both—and I guess I did. The old N-B outfit is for you two and all I ask is that you name the first boy after your granddad. Now get out of here—both of you. I want to sleep!"

Buck Jones' Next Picture

"SILVER SPURS"

A COMPLETE THRILLING STORY IN NEXT MONTH'S

Movie Action Magazine

MA—5

BUCK JONES WANTS STORIES!

A personal interview with one of the greatest Western stars in Hollywood.

A COWBOY was riding herd on Broadway.

He was a tall, massive man, with squared jaw and a widow's peak which only accented the rugged lines of his face. When he spoke, his voice carried with it the acrid smell of gun-smoke and the rumble of thunder through a canyon. Two steely blue eyes glinted from dark caverns.

To look at him, you wondered what was wrong about his appearance. It took some time to realize that he should have been wearing a broad-brimmed sombrero, an open-necked shirt with a gay neckerchief, heavy trousers and brightly-ornamented boots. Instead, he was conservatively dressed in city clothes, looking more like a vigorously healthy banker than the idol of millions of "Western fans" the world over!

Buck Jones was in New York on business.

"Tell 'em I'm here to get some stories," he said over the luncheon table in a smart restaurant in the Roaring Forties. "I've made all the good stories I could find into pictures. 'Silver Spurs' was the last one. Now I've got to rustle up some new ones. That's why I'm here in New York."

"Are good stories that hard to find?" we asked. It seemed foolish for a man to come three thousand miles just to read a few books which he ought to be able to read even more easily under the bright California sun.

"Hardest things in the world to find," Buck said with a positive note in his voice. That's one thing about him—once he says a thing, there is no one in the world who would doubt him!

"First of all," he went on to explain, "the stories I use for my pictures have to have drama in them. *Real* drama. I don't mean that they don't have action—fights, hard riding, quick shooting, and all that. But I'm not satisfied with a story that doesn't give the audience any more than those action qualities.

"And I know I'm on the right trail, because the letters I get every week—several mail bags full—tell me so. Just let me make a slip on my story selection, and make a picture that's a shade short on drama, and I hear about it!"

"Yes," we put in. "But why come all the way to New York for new stories?"

Buck grinned. "A fellow's got to have a vacation once in a while, doesn't he?" So we checked back over the records. Buck hadn't taken any time off since his last trip to New York, in the raw, early spring of 1932. Since then, he had worked hard at making pictures for his fans—somewhere between thirty and thirty-five, in all!

He not only plays the lead in all his pictures; he actually produces them, himself. He's the perfect combination of a hard-headed business man, visionary showman, and energetic cowboy.

"I'VE been producing for Universal Pictures for most the time since I was here last. That means a lot of business red tape, sitting in conferences, talking about money and stuff like that. A long way from chasing strays half across the State of Texas," he added with a sigh.

"How'd you like to be back chasing strays?" we asked him.

Buck Jones scratched his chin and grinned. "Some times, I get to thinking about it, and it seems like it would be a pretty good idea to get back on the range. It's a healthy life, and happy one, even if you don't make a lot of money.

"Then I look at the mail that came in that morning, and I see all the friends I have—friends who will take the trouble to sit down and write me just to say 'Hello,' even though we have never met, and probably never will—— Why, let me tell you, a fellow could ride range for a thousand years, and never make the friends I can make in a week!"

Buck, himself!

It was plain, a while later, that Buck hadn't been exaggerating at all. We walked out of the restaurant together. A bootblack standing at the curb saw us.

"Hya, Buck!" he called.

"Howdy," Buck called back.

Fifty feet further on, three youngsters pocketed him.

"You're Buck Jones, aren't you?" one of them asked excitedly.

"That's right."

"I'm Bill Brown (We've forgotten his name, but we're sure Buck hasn't!), and these fellows are my pals."

"How are you, fellows?" Buck shook hands all around.

"We saw your picture, 'The Throwback,' last week. Saw it all together."

"It was a swell picture, Mister Jones," a second boy put in.

"Only you didn't sock that guy hard enough," the third one finished.

"I'll sock him harder next time," Buck promised.

Bill Brown found an envelope in one of his pockets. "Would you give me your autograph?" he wanted to know. That brought on an epidemic of envelopes and fountain pens. When we went on, the boys were outfitted with autographs—not only for themselves, but for all their gang, too.

Buck's hotel was only half a block distant. But in that half block, in the busy heart of a strange city, Buck found at least eight more who knew him and were his friends. It was an inspiring thing!

"LET'S get back to my stories," Buck said, high up above the din of traffic, sitting in the comfort and ease of his hotel room. "The story situation for me is a tough one. I really haven't got the time to read everything that's printed. I've got a lot of other things to do.

"I pick my story," he went on, explaining why he hadn't the time. "Then I get my production crew together. I sit in with them while they prepare it for shooting, covering every detail from the writing of the scenario to picking out the locations where we'll visit for our outdoor scenes.

"Then there's the cast to be picked. That's always a tough job, because the girl that I'll want to play my sweetheart will want twice as much salary as I can afford to pay her. Or the villian I've picked out as being the only man in Hollywood who's nasty and ornery enough, will be tied up with some other picture on some other lot.

"But, even after the preparations and the casting are completed, I'm still not able to think about my next picture. I've got to go along with the company on location, be a hard-riding, straight-shooting hero, and supervise the job all the way through. Lots of times, I'll finish a shot where I'll be taming a wild bronc, and sit down for a rest. Then some one will step up with a telegram for me. It will be from the studio offices in Hollywood. 'You're taking too long to shoot,' it will say. Or, 'Costs are too high. Cut out stampede sequence.' So I'll have to make whatever decisions are necessary, on the spot, and send a wire back to Hollywood. By that time, they're ready for me to start chasing the villians, or kissing the heroine, or something."

Buck passed a weary hand across his forehead. Then he flashed a big grin, and we knew that he had only been kidding. It was probably even harder work than he made it seem, but there wasn't any doubt about it—he liked it!

"You still haven't got to the stories," we suggested.

"I'm getting to them now," he said. "First, remember that I make eight pictures a year. It takes from three to four weeks to shoot each one. Say, thirty weeks a year. Preparing, casting and editing takes at least two weeks a picture—usually more. That brings it up to forty-six or forty-eight weeks. You can see how much time that leaves me for reading story possibilities. None at all!"

"So I've just sneaked away from Hollywood. I came here to New York to meet and talk with writers and publishers. And, even though I've only been here a few days, I've lined up some swell stuff for my next few pictures!"

"It pays to work direct, then?" we asked.

"It sure does!" Buck said emphatically.

"Okay, then," we said, reaching for our hat and coat. "We'll tell our readers you've come three thousand miles to find stories that will give them extra thrills!"

"Tell 'em something else for me," he called after us. "Tell 'em that I read and answer my mail. Anybody who wants to write to me, I'll answer and gladly. I get a kick out of it!

"And," he threw at us as a parting word, "if they know of any books that they think will make good story material for me, say so! I'm always looking for good stories!"

HELL POPS LOOSE IN THE STOKE HOLE!

PAUL KELLY'S

"Here Comes Trouble!"

COMPLETE IN APRIL

Movie Action Magazine

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 53

RIFFRAFF

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, with Jean Harlow, Spencer Tracy, Una Merkel, Joseph Calleia, and Mickey Rooney.

This isn't a pleasant story—it's about such things as labor troubles in a fish-canning community, a girl who gets her man, babies, hunger, and jail—but it's an engrossing and interesting picture. As a movie, it carries weight because of the sincere and real performances which Miss Harlow and Mister Tracy give. You sympathize with them, you understand them and, whether you believe they're right or not, you like them.

A HEAVY, MEATY MELODRAMA TAKEN FROM LIFE.

THE LEAVENWORTH CASE

A Republic picture, with Donald Cook, Norman Foster, Jean Rouveral, Erin O'Brien-Moore, and Warren Hyme

Anna Katherine Green's classic mystery novel comes to the screen, full of well-timed suspense. Being let in on the secret early in the picture, you see who kills Miss O'Brien-Moore's husband, and why. From then on, you have the fun of watching Detective Norman Foster reach the solution that you've known all along.

THIS SWELL MYSTERY HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE FAMOUS PRISON OF THE SAME NAME.

ROSE OF THE RANCHO

A Paramount picture, with Gladys Swarthout, John Boles, Willie Howard, Charles Bickford, and H. B. Warner.

Here is the first Western picture ever to come to the screen starring a Metropolitan Opera soprano. Following the formula that has been set by William S. Hart, Tom Mix, and the others who have come along since, Paramount has concocted a sort of operetta filled with highwaymen who sing loudly and lustily as they waylay their victims, and a hero who sings a little better than the villains when he bests them in the end. Gladys Swarthout is the tops, though, when it comes to singing down all opposition. That funny guy, Willie Howard, helps matters along. The music is good, the tempo fast, and the picture is gay and enjoyable.

LIGHT OPERA ON HORSEBACK, WITH SOME STRONG VOICES AND FAST ACTION.

Continued on page 111

THE WORM BURNS

This is the actual script used in Hollywood to shoot this Monte Collins comedy!

(Editor's Note: This is an actual "shooting script" from which a two-reel comedy has been made by Radio Pictures. While not written to be read for enjoyment, we believe that the comic elements which are added to the script in the actual filming can also be added by the reader's imagination. All that is necessary is for the reader to understand the terms and phrases used here.

The script is divided into 154 separate scenes. This is for the director's convenience in scheduling his work, for each scene can be shot separately. However, there can be no break in the continuity of a scene. From start to finish, each scene as written must have continuous action.

Each scene is prefaced with instructions for the director and camerman. For instance, the first line of the second scene (Scene 5; Scenes 1, 2, and 3 were used for the "credits" to the cast and production crew, and Scene 4 was an insert, requiring no action) is:

5 *INT. OFFICE MS.*

The number indicates the position, in sequence in the final film, of the scene.

INT. OFFICE means that the scene is the interior of an office. Scenes are always labeled as Interior or Exterior shots.

MS is the abbreviation for Medium Shot, meaning that the camera is operated at a moderate distance from the scene. Also used for camera instructions in this script are:

CU—Close-up.
CS—Close Shot.
MCU—Medium Close-up.
MLS—Medium Long Shot.

Other abbreviations used in this script are:

FG—Foreground.
BG—Background.

Also, the terms *FADE IN, FADE OUT,* and *LAP DISSOLVE* are used to show how certain scenes change, on the screen, into the next following scenes. A *FADE IN* starts with blackness, and the scene gradually appears. A *FADE OUT* is just the reverse, used for ending a scene. A *LAP DISSOLVE* is when two scenes are actually shown at the same time, one fading away and the next one growing more distinct until the change is complete.

In several scenes, the dialogue is preceded by *Off*, signifying that the lines are spoken "off stage"—that is, outside the range of the camera.

It is interesting to note that, in Scene 52, where French is spoken, the English

THE CAST

MONTE COLLINS	Harold
DOROTHY SEBASTIAN	Wife
BILLY BEVAN	J. W. Munn

Directed by Harry Edwards

Produced by Lee Marcus

Story and screenplay by Harry Edwards and Jack Townley

RKO
Radio
PICTURES

translation is given. This is for the convenience of the censors who must pass upon all films before they are shown to the public. They must have accurate translations of all foreign words used in a picture in order to be sure that it will cause offense to no one.)

4 *FADE IN. INSERT NO. 1.*

Orchestra heard playing. Sign on door reads:

CHAMBERS OF
JUDGE
ELMER LUCAS
SUPERIOR COURT
DEPARTMENT 17

LAP DISSOLVE

5 *INT. OFFICE MS.*

Mrs. Underwood seated at left of desk. Judge at right. She talks.

WIFE: Judge Lucas, I'd give anything in the world if I could patch things up with my husband.

6 *INT. OFFICE MCU.*

Judge seated, looking to left FG, talks.

(From Scene 146) . . . She holds out shells to him.

JUDGE: Well, why can't you?

7 *INT. OFFICE MCU.*

Wife seated, looking to right FG, talks.

WIFE: I don't know.

8 *INT. OFFICE MCU.*

Judge seated, looking across to left FG, listening.

WIFE: *Off.* He doesn't seem able to assert himself. If he'd only stand on his own two feet.

9 *INT. OFFICE MCU.*

Wife seated. Looking to right FG, talking.

WIFE: But he lets that lawyer of his talk him into anything.

10 *INT. OFFICE MCU.*

Judge seated. Looking to left FG, talks.

JUDGE: And who is his lawyer?

11 *INT. OFFICE MCU.*

Wife seated. Looking to right FG, talks.

WIFE: J. W. Munn.

12 *INT. OFFICE MCU.*

Judge seated, looking across to left FG.

JUDGE: Oh.

13 *INT. HALLWAY MS.*

Munn and Harold coming on at right. Go to door at left. Harold talks nervously.

HAROLD: Oh, wait a minute.

14 *INT. HALLWAY CS.*

Munn and Harold standing at door. Harold talking nervously.

HAROLD: I can't go through with it.

MUNN: Now you haven't a thing to worry about. I, J. W. Munn, your attorney, will handle everything.

He turns to door.

HAROLD: Aw, no, no.

MUNN: Aw, forget it. Let me do the worrying.

He opens door at left. Exits through doorway. Harold following him. Nearly exits.

15 *INT. OFFICE MS.*

Wife seated at left of desk. Judge at right. Munn and Harold coming on at right through doorway. Munn crossing to desk as he talks.

MUNN: Ah, good morning, Judge. Good morning. I'm glad to see you.

He pats Judge on back.

MUNN: How are you this morning?

JUDGE: Why?

MUNN: Don't get up. Don't get up.

He looks to left. Sees Wife.

MUNN: Mrs. Underwood, it is a pleasure.

He crosses to her as he talks.

MUNN: You are looking more beautiful every day.

JUDGE: Will you please be seated?

MUNN: Yes, your honor.

He goes to right. Picks up chair. Harold starts to sit down. Munn carries chair to left.

16 *INT. OFFICE CS.*

Wife seated, looking to right FG. Munn putting chair down at left by her. Sits down by her.

17 *INT. OFFICE MCU.*

Judge seated, looking at papers. Talks.

JUDGE: Mrs. Underwood, this complaint states that Mister Underwood is in arrears in his alimony payments. Is that correct?

18 *INT. OFFICE CS.*

Wife seated at desk, looking to right, talks. Munn seated at left by her.

WIFE: Why, yes, your honor. I've received no alimony from Mister Underwood for the past two months.

MUNN: That's right.

19 *INT. OFFICE CU.*

Harold looks up at left FG, surprised.

20 *INT. OFFICE MCU.*

Judge seated, looking at papers. Looks across to left. Talks.

JUDGE: And what hardships, if any, has this worked upon you?

21 *INT. OFFICE CS.*

Wife seated. Munn seated at left by her. Talks.

MUNN: Now, my dear, just tell the judge.

22 *INT. ROOM CU.*

Harold looking to left, FG, listening nervously.

MUNN: *Off.* In your own sweet words.

23 *INT. OFFICE CS.*

Wife seated. Munn by her at left. She looks across to right. Talks.

WIFE: Well, your honor, it's left me practically destitute. I've had to economize to the extent of dispensing with three maids, two gardeners, one butler.

24 *INT. ROOM MS.*

Harold seated at right, moves restlessly as he listens. Judge seated at left, looks at him.

WIFE: *Off.* Which has caused me great humiliation.

Judge talks to Harold.

JUDGE: Well, what have you to say?

25 *INT. OFFICE CS.*

Harold seated, looks to left nervously. Stutters.

HAROLD: Why, I——

26 *INT. OFFICE CS.*

Wife seated. Munn seated at left by her.

27 *INT. OFFICE CS.*

Harold seated, looking to left. Camera following him as he rises, talking. Stuttering.

HAROLD: Uh, well, you—uh——

28 *INT. OFFICE MCU.*

Judge seated, looking up to right FG. Talks.

JUDGE: And why haven't you paid the alimony?

29 *INT. OFFICE CS.*

Harold standing. Looking to left. Talks nervously.

HAROLD: Well, you see, sir, I haven't any money. Besides, I can't find a job.

30 *INT. OFFICE MCU.*

Judge seated. Looking up to right FG. Talks.

JUDGE: Would you work if you could find a job?

31 *INT. OFFICE CS.*

Harold standing, looking to left. Talks.

HAROLD: Oh, yes, sir. I—I want

to pay that back alimony. Why, I'd work at any kind of a job.

JUDGE: *Off.* You would?

HAROLD: Yes, sir, any kind.

32 *INT. OFFICE MCU.*

Judge seated. Looking to right FG. Glances to left as he talks.

JUDGE: Well, I think we can settle this to the satisfaction of every one concerned

33 *INT. OFFICE CS.*

Wife seated. Munn by her. Listening.

JUDGE: *Off.* Mrs. Underwood has had to dismiss one of her butlers.

34 *INT. OFFICE CS.*

Harold looking down nervously.

JUDGE: *Off.* And you're willing to accept any kind of a job——

35 *INT. OFFICE MS.*

Judge seated at right, talking. Wife and Munn at left.

JUDGE: It's the order of this court that you work out your back alimony as Mrs. Underwood's butler.

Munn rises.

MUNN: Your honor, I object.

JUDGE: Shut up. Sit down.

Munn sits down.

36 *INT. OFFICE CS.*

Camera following Harold as he sits down.

FADE OUT

37 *FADE IN. EXT. POOL MLS.*

Guests swimming in pool. Others diving in. Others standing around pool. General indistinct talking. Laughter.

38 *EXT. LAWN MS.*

Harold in butler's outfit holding tray of drinks. Watching to FG. General indistinct talking and laughter heard.

HAROLD: Aw——

He puts tray down. Starts to unbutton vest, obviously to quit job.

HAROLD: I won't do it.

Two girls come on at left BG. He stops at right. Listening as they come to FG.

GIRL: By the way, what's become of your husband?

2ND GIRL: Oh, he's in jail.

GIRL: What, again?

2ND GIRL: Sure, I put him in for not paying his back alimony.

Girl laughs. They exit right FG. Harold watching after them.

39 *EXT. LAWN CS.*

Harold looking around thoughtfully. General indistinct talking and laughter heard. He talks.

HAROLD: Jail!

He buttons vest.

40 *EXT. LAWN MS.*

Harold picks up tray of drinks. Muttering to himself indistinctly. Indistinct talking and laughter heard.

41 *EXT. LAWN MS.*

Wife standing at table. Back to camera. Couple seated at table. Others in BG. Indistinct talking and laughter heard. Wife talks to couple at table.

WIFE: You did want a cocktail, didn't you? I think they'll be here right away.

42 *EXT. LAWN MS.*

Guests lounging about. Some seated at tables. Others lying on ground.

General indistinct talking and laughing. Harold coming on at left BG. Carrying tray of drinks. Walks around guests. Camera following him to right. He stumbles over girl's feet. Falls to right.

43 *EXT. LAWN MS.*

Wife standing at table, back to camera. Couple seated at table. Others in BG. Harold falls on at left. Boy rises. Wife turns. Sees Harold.

44 *EXT. LAWN MCU.*

Wife looking down to left FG, shocked. Others partly on behind her.

45 *EXT. LAWN MS.*

Wife takes tray from Harold as he starts to rise. Boy and girl at table. Others in BG. Wife talks as she puts tray on table.

WIFE: Here they are, now.

Harold rises.

WIFE: I can't tell you how difficult it is to get good servants these days.

She turns to Harold.

WIFE: That's quite enough, Perkins.

She kicks him. Turns back to camera. He exits left.

46 *EXT. LAWN MLS.*

Couple seated. Car coming on at left BG. Horn heard. Camera following car to right reveals group seated at right. Yelling. Indistinct talking and laughing heard. Car stops at right BG.

47 *EXT. CAR MCS.*

Munn seated in car. Back to camera. Harold coming on at right. Opens car door. Laughing as he picks up golf bag. Helps Munn out of car. Talks delightedly.

HAROLD: Gee, am I glad to see you. Say, J. W., you gotta get me out of this.

MUNN: Oh, I forgot to tell you, I've given up my law practice.

He laughs. Jarvis comes on at right. Sees Harold shaking hands with Munn.

HAROLD: Oh, but—oh, but you can't do that.

JARVIS: Perkins!

Harold turns to him.

HAROLD: Yeah, but——

He straightens up. Jarvis crosses to left in front of them. Nearly exiting.

48 *EXT. CAR CS.*

Munn and Harold standing by car. Munn talks amused.

MUNN: Perkins?

HAROLD: Yes, she made me change my name.

MUNN: Perkins!

He laughs. Jarvis comes partly on at left FG, talks.

JARVIS: I have your same room prepared for you, sir.

MUNN: The same one? Very good.

Jarvis crosses in front of them to right, exiting. They look after him.

MUNN: Perkins, me bags!

He snaps fingers. Crosses in front of Harold to right. Exiting. Harold looks after him, dumfounded, talks.

HAROLD: The—the same room. He's given up his law practice. Oh, oh, there's something wrong——

He comes to left FG.

49 *EXT. CAR MCS.*

Harold coming to FG. Picks up bags. Talks as he goes to right BG.

HAROLD: There's something very wrong here.

50 *EXT. LAWN MS.*

Guests seated at tables. Others on ground. Munn coming on at left BG, crossing to right, followed by Harold. Munn talking. Others greeting him. All talking at once.

MUNN: Ah, here we are, folks!

All talking at once.

MUNN: I thought I'd never get here, but here I am.

Camera following him across to right.

51 *EXT. PORCH MS.*

Munn coming toward FG, followed by Jarvis and Harold. Couple crossing in FG to left. He speaks to them.

MUNN: How are you?

Couple exits left. Indistinct talking heard. Camera follows Munn to right, revealing maid behind bar. He stops at bar.

MUNN: Ah, Marie——

Jarvis crosses to right.

52 *EXT. PORCH MS.*

Munn standing at bar, back to camera. Marie behind bar. Talks to him. Harold coming on at left, carrying bags. Stops.

MAID: *Bon jour, Monsieur.* (Good day, sir.)

MUNN: You're looking prettier every day.

MAID: *Merci.* (Thank you.)

They exit as camera follows Harold across to right with bags. Goes to door in BG. Munn heard talking indistinctly.

53 *EXT. PORCH MS.*

Munn standing at bar, drinking. Marie behind bar. He talks as he puts glass down.

MUNN: You've outdone yourself to-day, Marie.

MARIE: Oh, thank you very much, Monsieur Munn.

He looks off to left.

54 *EXT. PORCH MS.*

Jarvis coming on out of the room. Goes to left, exiting.

55 *EXT. PORCH MS.*

Munn standing at bar. Marie behind bar. Jarvis coming on at right FG. Stops by Munn. Talks.

JARVIS: I trust that our rearrangement of the garden will meet with your approval, Mister Munn.

MUNN: Oh, very good, very good —but——

56 *EXT. PORCH CS.*

Harold coming on through doorway. Closes door. Stops.

MUNN: *Off.* Of course, when I move in, there'll be a few changes I'll wish to make.

JARVIS: *Off.* Oh, certainly, Mister Munn.

HAROLD: When—when he moves in?

57 *EXT. PORCH MS.*

Munn and Jarvis standing at bar. Marie behind bar. Munn talking.

MUNN: That'll be all now.

Jarvis goes behind bar. Wife runs on at left.

WIFE: Why, J. W.

He turns to her.

MUNN: Minnie!

He kisses her hands.

58 *EXT. PORCH MCU.*

Munn looking to FG, talking. Marie and Jarvis partly on in BG.

MUNN: You're looking more beautiful than ever.

59 *EXT. PORCH MCU.*

Wife looking to FG. Talks.

WIFE: Flatterer! Come, everybody's dying to meet you.

She starts to BG. Munn coming on at right FG.

MUNN: Right.

60 *EXT. PORCH CS.*

Harold standing at door. Watching to left FG. Talks furiously.

HAROLD: My wife! My wife!

He comes to left FG. Exiting.

61 *EXT. PORCH MCS.*

Jarvis and Marie behind bar. Harold coming on at right FG. Stops at bar. Watching off to left. He turns to bar. Jarvis talks to Marie.

JARVIS: You're going to like your new master.

MARIE: Don't they make the nicest looking couple?

Harold looks off to left.

MARIE: Monsieur Munn says her first husband was the most awful weak-kneed nincompoop.

Harold's knees bend. He straightens up. Sees drink. Starts to take it. Jarvis stops him.

JARVIS: Ah! Ah!

Jarvis picks up glass. Starts to drink.

62 *EXT. PORCH CU.*

Harold looking to right. Looks off to left furiously.

63 *EXT. LAWN MS.*

Guests seated about, talking indistinctly. Laughing. Wife and Munn coming toward group at table in FG. Wife talking.

WIFE: Oh, J. W., I want you to meet Mister and Mrs. Wright.

MRS. WRIGHT: Mister Munn.

MUNN: With pleasure——

He turns to Mister Wright.

MUNN: Delighted

WRIGHT: How do you do?

64 *EXT. GARDEN MS.*

Harold coming on from BG. General indistinct talking heard. He stops by tree. Takes out sling-shot.

65 *EXT. LAWN CS.*

Wife and Munn standing at table. Back to camera. Girl seated at right. Wife talking.

WIFE: And Miss Miller.

Munn bows.

66 *EXT. LAWN CS.*

Harold shooting sling-shot to right.

67 *EXT. GARDEN MS.*

Group seated at table. Munn and wife standing. He yells. Leaps over table onto ground. Others laughing. Rise. Rush to him. He flounders about.

68 *EXT. GARDEN CS.*

Munn rising in FG. Others crowding around him. All talking at once, laughing. He looks dazed.

69 *EXT. GARDEN CS.*

Harold looking off to right gleefully. Indistinct talking heard.

70 *EXT. GARDEN CS.*

Munn holds up hands. Group around him all talking at once, indistinctly. He talks.

MUNN: One can get tired of anything.

All laugh.

MUNN: Only once.

He bows. All talking at once, laughing.

71 *EXT. GARDEN CS.*

Harold shooting sling-shot off to right. Indistinct talking and laughing heard.

72 *EXT. GARDEN MCS.*

Group around Munn. He jumps up. Others laughing. All talking at once.

73 *EXT. GARDEN CS.*

Harold looking off to right. Indistinct talking and laughter heard. He drops sling-shot. Hums slightly as he starts to dust off saddle.

74 *EXT. GARDEN CS.*

Munn looking off to left. Others behind him. General indistinct talking and laughter. Munn looks around. Talks.

MUNN: Pardon me, folks. I'll be right back.

All talking at once as he goes to left.

BOY: Don't be long.

GIRL: Hurry back now.

He exits left.

75 *EXT. GARDEN CS.*

Harold dusting saddle on mechanical horse. Indistinct talking and laughter heard. He gets up on saddle, humming.

76 *EXT. GARDEN MS.*

Harold on mechanical horse, dusting it. Munn coming on at right. Talks.

MUNN: Ah, Perkins, a little exercise.

HAROLD: No, just polishing it.

MUNN: Oh!

He reaches down. Picks up sling-shot. Puts it in pocket. Quickly turns switch on mechanical horse. It starts.

HAROLD: Oh, no, don't! No, no. Wait a minute. Wait, wait!

Munn laughs.

MUNN: Ah, you will, will you?

He laughs. Harold bouncing around in saddle.

HAROLD: Help, help!

77 *INSERT NO. 2.*

Hand turning switch. Yelling heard.

HAROLD: *Off.* Help!

78 *EXT. GARDEN CS.*

Munn looking off to left, laughing. Yelling heard.

79 *EXT. GARDEN CU.*

Harold bouncing back and forth. Yelling. Muttering indistinctly.

80 *EXT. GARDEN CS.*

Munn looking to left, laughing. Takes sling-shot from pocket. Harold heard muttering. Munn talks.

MUNN: Good-by, Perkins.

He goes to right, exiting.

81 *EXT. GRDEN CU.*

Harold bouncing back and forth. Muttering. Tries to hold head still. Yelling.

82 *EXT. GARDEN MCS.*

Harold on mechanical horse bouncing around. Yelling.

83 *EXT. LAWN MS.*

Girl and boy seated at table. Others in BG. All laughing, talking at once, indistinctly. Munn comes on at left. Girl hands him drink.

MUNN: Well, well, I don't mind if I do.

He looks off to left. Sees:

84 *EXT. LAWN MCS.*

Harold bouncing around on mechanical horse. Muttering. Yelling.

HAROLD: S-S-S-Stop this thing!

85 *EXT. LAWN MS.*

Munn looking off to left, laughing. Girl and boy seated. Others in BG. General laughter. Munn turns to boy and girl. Talks.

MUNN: Well, here's to your very best.

86 *EXT. LAWN MS.*

Harold bouncing on mechanical horse. Stammering. Noise of horse heard.

HAROLD: S-S-Stop—this—thing!

87 *INSERT NO. 3. MOTOR SMOKING.*

Harold heard yelling. Sound of horse heard. Motor explodes. Noise of explosion. Screaming heard.

88 *EXT. LAWN MS.*

Harold jumping down from mechanical horse. Muttering indistinctly. Jiggles across to right, exiting.

89 *EXT. LAWN MS.*

Munn standing by girl and boy at table. Others in BG. General indistinct talking. Harold jiggles on at left. Grabs Munn. They fall to ground. Others laughing as they roll to FG.

BOY: They're at it again.

Munn muttering indistinctly as he and Harold roll to right FG. Exiting.

90 *EXT. POOL MS.*

Couple seated in BG. Confusion heard. Munn and Harold roll on down steps at left. Others watching, laughing. General indistinct talking.

91 *EXT. LAWN MS.*

Group watching to right, laughing. All talking indistinctly. They run to right. Nearly all exiting.

92 *EXT. POOL MS.*

Group lining up at edge of pool watching as Munn and Harold rise up out of pool. All laughing, applauding. General indistinct talking. Munn ducks Harold under water.

93 *EXT. POOL MCS.*

Munn in water. Looking about. Laughing and indistinct talking heard. Harold rises out of water. Wipes eyes. Munn laughs at him. Harold turns. Sees him. Ducks him under.

94 *EXT. POOL MS.*

Group standing at edge of pool, watching to right FG, laughing, applauding. General indistinct talking.

95 *EXT. WATER MS.*

Munn and Harold standing up in water. Laughing and indistinct talking heard. Munn ducks Harold under. Laughs.

96 *EXT. POOL MS.*

Group standing at edge of pool watching down to right FG, laughing, applauding. Talking indistinctly. They look off to left. Girl talks.

GIRL: Come on, everybody—eats!

They start to left. All talking at once.

97 *EXT. POOL MS.*

Munn and Harold in water. Guests along edge of pool in BG running to left. All talking at once. They exit left. Munn swims to left, exits.

98 *EXT. POOL MLS.*

Group standing at edge of pool watching as Munn comes to left. All laughing and talking at once. He starts to walk up steps to pool.

99 *EXT. POOL MCS.*

Munn coming up steps at right. Group at left. All talking and laughing. Girl comes on at left. Talks to Munn.

LUCILLE: J. W., how about that diving exhibition you were going to give us?

MUNN: Diving? You haven't seen any diving till you see me. Wait till I get into my bathing suit, and I'll really show you something.

He gets out of pool. All going to left, exiting. Laughing and talking indistinctly.

100 *EXT. POOL CS.*

Harold standing in archway. Turns to FG. Disgusted. Laughter and indistinct talking heard. He looks to left. Sees trap. Looks at it thoughtfully. Touches it with finger. It snaps. Just missing his finger.

HAROLD: Ooow!

He looks to left FG. Smiling thoughtfully.

HAROLD: Umm——

He takes trap from hook.

HAROLD: Fancy diver, huh?

He laughs.

LAP DISSOLVE

101 *EXT. POOL MCS.*

Camera shooting across water. Diving board at left BG. Bubbles rising from under water.

102 *INT. POOL CS.*

Harold on bottom of pool. Setting trap. He starts to rise.

103 *EXT. POOL MCS.*

Camera shooting down at water. Diving board at left BG. Bubbles rising from under water. Harold comes up out of water. Swims to left. Camera following him. Train whistle heard. He stops at edge of pool. Puts chain around post. Slips. Camera follows him as he falls back into water. Exits under water.

104 *INT. POOL CS.*

Trap on bottom of pool. Harold coming on from above. Seat of bathing suit gets caught as trap snaps shut.

105 *EXT. WATER CS.*

Camera shooting down at bubbles rising out of water.

106 *INSERT NO. 4. CHAIN LOOPED OVER IRON POST. JERKING. WATER CHURNING.*

107 *INT. POOL CS.*

Trap at bottom of pool. Harold partly on. Caught in trap. Struggling to get bathing suit free.

108 *INSERT NO. 4. CHAIN LOOPED OVER IRON POST. JERKING. WATER CHURNING.*

109 *EXT. POOL MCS.*

Camera shooting down at water. Harold under water. Minus bathing suit. Swimming across to left. He comes on up out of water. Misses suit. Looks down into water.

110 *INT. POOL CS.*

Trap on bottom of pool. Torn bathing suit caught in trap.

111 *EXT. POOL CS.*

Harold looking down into water. Laughing and indistinct talking heard. He starts to swim to left. Stops, looks off to right nervously.

112 *EXT. POOL MLS.*

Guests coming on at left BG. All talking and laughing. They run alongside of pool. Some sitting down. Girl and boy come on at left BG. Carrying plates. Sit down in FG.

113 *EXT. POOL CS.*

Harold looking down nervously. General indistinct talking and laughter heard.

HAROLD: Oh, my—my—oh, my!

114 *EXT. POOL CS.*

Boys and girls going to BG carrying plates. Wife comes on at left. General indistinct talking and laughter heard. She stops in FG. Looks off to left. Talks shocked.

WIFE: Perkins, you come out of that water and help me serve my guests.

115 *EXT. POOL CS.*

Harold in water. Glances at bare shoulders. Looks up to right. Talks.

HAROLD: Very good, Ma'am.

116 *EXT. POOL CS.*

Wife looking down to left, smiles. Turns to right, hiding face behind hat. Others in BG. General indistinct talking and laughter heard. She goes to BG. Nearly exiting.

117 *EXT. POOL CS.*

Harold in water. Looking off to right. General indistinct talking and laughter heard.

118 *EXT. POOL MS.*

Girls seated at edge of pool. Eating lunch. Munn runs down steps down to edge of pool. Talks.

MUNN: And now for that exhibition of fancy diving I was telling you about!

GIRLS: Hurry!

Cheering heard. Applause. Munn runs to right, exits.

119 *EXT. WATER CS.*

Harold in water. Cheering and applause heard. He looks off to right thoughtfully.

120 *EXT. POOL MLS.*

Guests standing along edge of pool, applauding. Cheering as Munn runs to diving board. At right FG. He runs out to end of diving board. Stops. Talks.

MUNN: Now watch me.

He loses balance. Topples into water, exiting. Crowd laughs.

121 *EXT. POOL CS.*

Camera shooting down at water rippling. Munn rises out of water, sputtering. Talks. General indistinct talking and laughter heard.

MUNN: Who shoved me?

122 *EXT. POOL CS.*

Camera shooting down at Harold in water. He dives under. Nearly exits. Bubbles rising.

123 *EXT. POOL MCU.*

Camera shooting down at Munn in water. Indistinct talking and laughter heard. He laughs. Talks.

MUNN: Well, the next will be my famous pancake dive!

124 *EXT. POOL MS.*

Boys and girls standing at edge of pool. Laughing. Applauding. General indistinct talking.

125 *EXT. POOL MCU.*

Munn smiling. Applause and cheering heard. He looks surprised as straps of his bathing suit fall away from his shoulders. He looks down.

MUNN: Oooh!

He looks down into water. Looks up, sputtering. Crowd heard yelling.

126 *EXT. POOL MS.*

Harold swimming on at left. Goes to edge of pool. Gets out of pool. He is wearing Munn's bathing suit. Crowd heard laughing. Yelling.

127 *EXT. POOL MS.*

Boys and girls standing at edge of pool. All talking at once indistinctly, laughing.

128 *EXT. POOL MS.*

Harold looking at FG. Laughter and indistinct talking heard.. He climbs over wall at right. Exiting.

129 *EXT. POOL MCU.*

Camera shooting down at Munn in water looking down. Crowd heard laughing and yelling. He looks up, talks.

MUNN: No, not just now.

LUCILLE: *Off.* Come on, J. W. Your steak is getting cold.

MUNN: No, thank you, I—I had a big breakfast.

General indistinct talking and laughter heard.

130 *EXT. LAWN MS.*

Harold standing by wall. Indistinct talking and laughter heard. He leans down. Turns on valve to drain pool.

131 *INSERT NO. 5. PIPE COMING OUT OF GROUP AT RIGHT. WATER STARTS POURING OUT.*

132 *EXT. LAWN MS.*

Harold turning on valve to drain pool. Rises. Looks over wall to left. Indistinct talking and laughter heard.

133 *INSERT NO. 6. WATER LEVEL OF POOL LOWERING RAPIDLY. INDISTINCT TALKING AND LAUGHTER HEARD.*

134 *EXT. LAWN MS.*

Harold watching over wall at left. Indistinct talking and laughter heard. He turns. Looks around. Runs to right FG, exiting.

135 *EXT. POOL MS.*

Guests seated along edge of pool. General indistinct talking and laughter heard.

136 *EXT. POOL MCU.*

Munn standing in water. Indistinct talking heard. He looks to FG. Surprised as he sees:

137 *INSERT NO. 6. LEVEL OF WATER IN POOL LOWERING RAPIDLY. INDISTINCT TALKING HEARD.*

138 *EXT. POOL MCU.*

Munn watching to FG. Worriedly. Indistinct talking heard. He looks about frantically.

MUNN: Oooh, ooh !

139 *INSERT NO. 6. LEVEL OF WATER IN POOL LOWERING RAPIDLY. INDISTINCT TALKING HEARD. WATER HEARD GURGLING.*

140 *EXT. POOL MCS.*

Munn standing in water, looking about frantically. Rubber horse floating on at left. Munn looks around thoughtfully. Grabs horse. Turns it over. Opens it. Gets inside it. Exiting under it.

141 *EXT. POOL MS.*

Harold holding gun. Taking box of cartridges from cupboard at right. Comes to right FG, exiting.

142 *EXT. POOL MS.*

Guests seated about, laughing. Talking indistinctly. Maid serving cocktails to group at table at right FG. Harold runs on down steps in BG carrying gun and cartridges. Maid gasps as she sees him. He talks.

HAROLD: Not one word out of you!

Camera moving back as he comes to FG reveals Jarvis at left serving guests. He turns around. Sees Harold. Sputters. Talks.

JARVIS: Perkins, have you gone mad!

Harold hands him boxes of shells as he talks.

HAROLD: Here. I was mad a while ago——

He grabs shells from Jarvis.

HAROLD: Give me those! Now, get out!

He looks around. Calling angrily.

HAROLD: All of you, get out!

Girls scream. Rise. Run to BG. Jarvis runs to BG, exiting. Wife comes on in FG. Stops Harold as he comes to FG.

WIFE: Oh, Harold! Harold! What's the matter with you?

HAROLD: Hmm, so I'm a weak-kneed nincompoop, am I?

He shoves her back to right. She sits down.

HAROLD: I'll show you!

He turns to left.

HAROLD: Listen, I want every one of you to get out of here!

143 *EXT. POOL MS.*

Guests standing and sitting at edge of pool. Talk indistinctly. Rise as they hear.

HAROLD: *Off.* I mean it!

144 *EXT. POOL MS.*

Harold standing at edge of pool holding gun. Looking off to left, talking. Wife seated at right watching surprised.

HAROLD: Get out before I count three!

He counts quickly.

HAROLD: One, two, three!

145 *EXT. POOL MS.*

Guests scrambling over wall, running to BG. Yelling. Shooting heard. Confusion.

146 *EXT. POOL MCS.*

Harold shooting gun off to left. Wife seated at right, smiling. He empties gun. Turns to her. Muttering. She holds out shells to him. Rises. Points off to left. Talks.

WIFE: Get him!

He looks off to left. Sees.

147 *INT. POOL MS.*

Camera shooting down at nearly dry pool. Munn under rubber horse at bottom of pool.

148 *EXT. POOL MCS.*

Harold and wife looking off to left. He mutters indistinctly as he loads gun. Aims to left.

149 *INT. POOL MS.*

Camera shooting down at nearly empty pool. Munn under rubber horse at bottom of pool. Shot heard. He yells. Kicks. Rises, jumps around.

150 *EXT. POOL MCS.*

Harold and wife looking off to left. Yelling heard. He puts another shell in gun. Aims to left.

151 *EXT. POOL MS.*

Munn wearing rubber horse. Jumping about. Yelling. Shot heard. Camera follows him as he runs up side of pool to right. Yelling. Shot heard again. He jumps. Runs up steps at right. Shot heard. He yells. Runs to right. Camera panning after him.

152 *EXT. DRIVEWAY MS.*

Car at right. Shot heard. Munn runs on at left, yelling. Wearing rubber horse. Gets into car. Closes door. Shot heard. He yells. Sits down.

153 *EXT. DRIVEWAY MS.*

Munn in car wearing rubber horse. Drives to right nearly exiting.

154 *EXT. POOL MCU.*

Harold and wife looking off to left. He turns to her. She talks proudly.

WIFE: Oh, you big bad man!

HAROLD: Am I?

WIFE: Yes.

She puts arms around him. They exit behind her hat.

FADE OUT

THE END.

TOUGH GUY

What can one kid and a dog do to the toughest gang in the West? Read this and find out!

FREDDIE and Duke were riding the high roads of romance and spanning the broad highways of youth and adventure. In reality, they were rumbling along in the back end of a vegetable truck a few miles outside the city limits of Los Angeles.

Freddie had been christened Frederick Martindale Vincent III. He never could understand that. But that wasn't the reason he and Duke were running away from the comforts of a wealthy home. No, Freddie had thought about leaving several times before. But, today, when his father refused to allow Duke in the house as Freddie's friend, the breaking point had been reached. After all, Duke *was* an alert and faithful police dog. And to Freddie's eleven years, that was just cause for departing.

So it was "Eastward ho, to Arizona!" Arizona promised cowboys and Indians—and maybe a few black-masked stagecoach bandits. At least, Freddie hoped so.

At a gas station a few miles back, tired of trudging along the endless road, the boy and the dog had crept stealthily in among the crates which loaded this parked truck. Since then they had bounced, rolled, and tossed, mile after mile. Cramped and uncomfortable, yet they were happy and satisfied. At intervals, though, Freddie looked longingly at Duke, and sort of wished he could talk to the dog. Then he could have asked him if he thought his father had read his farewell note; whether he would be angry when he did; and also, what he would do about it.

So many thoughts surged through his young head that he soon became weary. With Duke's warm body crouched up close beside him, Freddie would have easily fallen asleep. But, suddenly, the voices of the men in the cab of the truck became clearly audible. The truck had come upon a recently repaired stretch of pavement, which caused the jolting and jarring to subside. This allowed Freddie to hear the men talking for the first time.

"THAT looks like Tony and the rest of the boys in those three cars up ahead, Pete."

It was the calm voice of Joe Salerno which Freddie heard. Salerno ruled one of the gangs which infested the Los Angeles water front. He ruled with his gun, and they respected that gun. Besides, he had directed them through some pretty clever jobs around the west coast.

THE CAST

JACKIE COOPER	Freddie
RIN TIN TIN, JR.	Duke
JOSEPH CALLEIA	Joe
Harvey Stephens	Chief Davis
Robert Warwick	Vincent

Produced by Harry Rapf
Directed by Chester M. Franklin
Story and Screenplay by
Florence Ryerson and Edgar Allen Woolf

A fictionization of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture of the same title.

He had a record. He'd been to "school," as gangland expressed it. But Joe had always been lucky with the courts. Five years had been his longest stretch.

Pete was just a hireling of Salerno's. A gunman who could usually shoot his way out of a jam. So Joe always liked to have him around when there was "work" to be done.

"Yeah, that's Tony and 'Bud' in the Packard, all right," was Pete's answer. "And the other boys are in the two cars ahead of them."

"That armored car can't be very far ahead, then."

"Naw. It went by while we was stallin' around at that gas station."

"You remember the plans," Joe cautioned. "When we spot the car, Shorty will drive up and force them off the road. Then the rest of the cars will pull up around it, and start shootin'."

"Then, we throw the dough in the truck, here, and let the rest get away in their cars. Right?"

"Right, Pete!"

Freddie's eyes were as big as the cabbages beside him. He knew the significance of what he had heard, and he was scared. Tighter and tighter he hugged his arms around Duke. His dreams were coming true—too true!

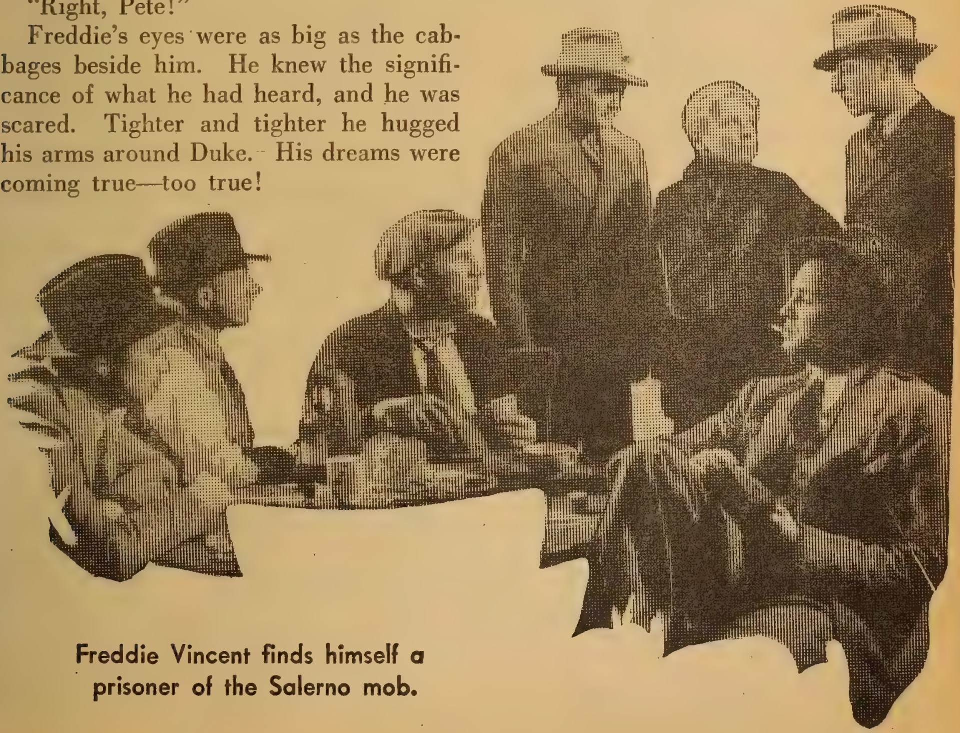
Here, were his "romantic stagecoach bandits" come to life. And he was riding with them. Escape? The truck was racing along too fast for that. If he could have peered through the cab window, he'd have seen the speedometer pass seventy-three.

THE brakes bellowed a terror-filling screech, vegetable crates crashed down on all sides of the boy, and the truck halted with an abrupt and vicious lurch. Then came the fireworks.

Freddie heard guns open up from all angles. Automatics belched in front of him; whizzing rifle shots *zzinged* overhead; and stuttering machine guns staccatoed the screams of collapsing men. The roar was terrific, echoing miles up the valley.

It ceased with the same lightninglike stroke with which it began. In its place, quick, sharp voices rang back toward Freddie.

"Get that dough, 'Shorty'!"



Freddie Vincent finds himself a prisoner of the Salerno mob.

"Keep those two mugs covered, 'Chi'!"

"Here's the stuff, boss."

"Okay. Beat it! Hey, Tony, what's the matter with Pete?"

"They wiped him out!"

"Let's go then, AND STEP ON IT!"

Gears clashed, pulled the cars back onto the road, and sent them speeding toward the heavily-wooded mountain country. Freddie, bewildered and terror-stricken, clung breathlessly to Duke. Everything had occurred with such startling rapidity, and he had been so frightened, that all thought of escape had evaded him. It was too late now. Again, the wheels of the truck were turning over a mile every sixty seconds.

Many of those passed before Freddie's fear entirely evaporated. He was still cautious, but hoped that the shooting was over for that afternoon, anyway. As there was silence up front in the cab, now, he decided to investigate. Where he had been afraid, earlier, he was now filled with innocent boldness—that boldness which is born of youthful ignorance!

Rising quickly, he peered in through the window at the back of the driver's cab. The boy's flashing glance revealed that the driver was alone. Keeping him company on the seat were a machine gun-rifle and a big metal suitcase. Freddie quickly recognized the suitcase as the money taken from the armored car.

All that fascinated him, but his eyes stared mostly at the mirror in front of Joe. He could see most of Joe's face. It was hard and mean. Piercing black eyes focused straight ahead; and a thin black smudge of a mustache lined his lip.

As Freddie crouched back down, away from the window, a chill of fear swept over the boy. He wished that he hadn't seen Joe. From what had happened so far, Freddie was sure that this man would stop at nothing—that he'd do anything for his freedom and safety!

LATE afternoon found the truck still rumbling on. It hadn't stopped since the hold-up. Thus, Freddie and Duke were still huddled among the turnip crates and the potato sacks.

The sky was graying and they couldn't see very much. But Freddie knew they were somewhere in the mountains. The fresh aroma of pine filled the air. Looking up, he could see masses of trees. Also, the bouncing and tossing had begun again. So, Freddie knew that Joe had turned off the highway and was headed up some rough, isolated, mountain road.

To Freddie, it seemed that they rode that rough road for hours. How he hoped the truck would soon reach its destination! Not because he had formulated any plans of escape. But those vegetable crates were beating bruises all over him.

At last the truck slowed down. He heard the brakes and felt it stop. A rasp of metal against metal told him Joe was getting out with the suitcase. Instantly, ideas flashed across Freddie's mind. He'd wait until Joe had gone, and then he'd get out. The sun had gone down and it was night. That would make his getaway easier.

Silent, almost not breathing, the boy waited for Joe to clear out. But at the sound of Joe's footsteps in the dark, Duke's ears stood erect. He bounded up, shook himself, and tried to get out of Freddie's grasp. A crate came tumbling down from the top!

Joe's flashlight gleamed into the rear of the truck. It was followed by the nose of an automatic. With the light in his eyes, Freddie couldn't see Joe's face. But it must have been framed in as much surprise as the boy's.

"What are you doin' here?" Joe growled. He couldn't see the dog.

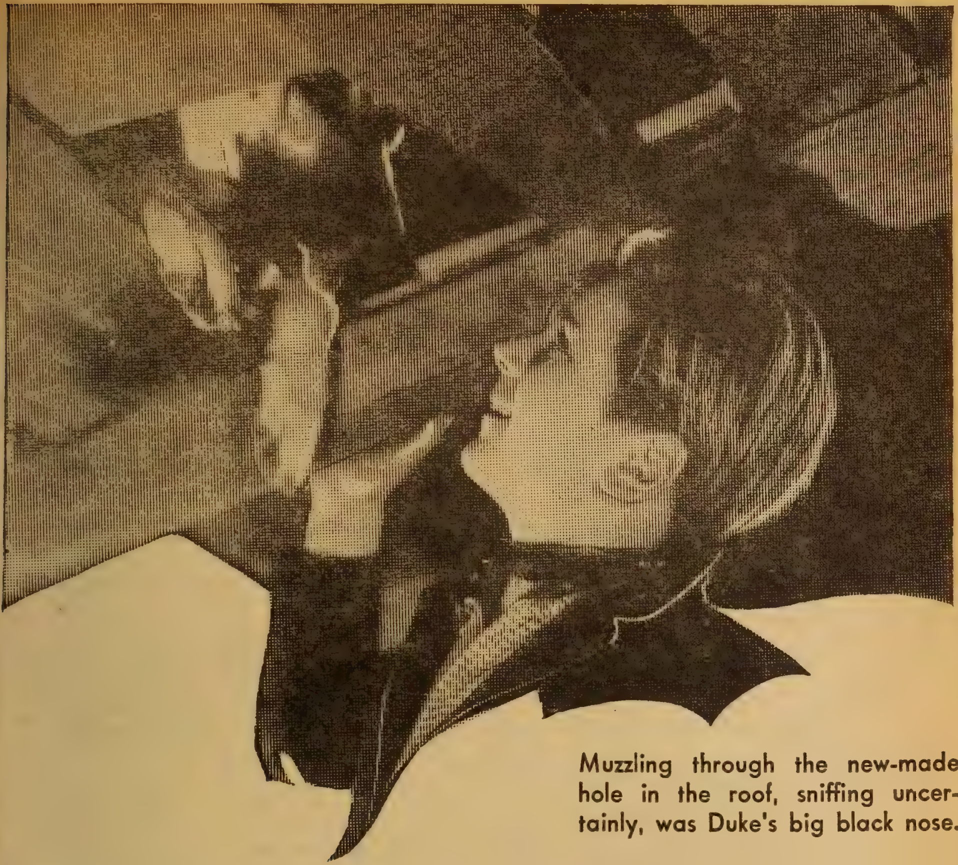
"I'm—I'm—I'm hitch-hiking." Freddie could hardly speak.

"When'd ya get in the truck?"

"Just before the shooting."

"Before the shootin', huh?" Joe spoke almost to himself. "All right, get out."

As Freddie climbed out of the truck,



Muzzling through the new-made hole in the roof, sniffing uncertainly, was Duke's big black nose.

Joe put down his gun and grabbed him roughly by the arm.

Fred winced. "Let me go!"

"Shut up!" There was unbelievable menace in the gangster's tone.

Freddie surveyed his surroundings. The truck had stopped a few yards from an old ramshackle house. Joe was leading him to it. The boy wondered if this was the gang's hide-out; he supposed that it was, because there were three other cars, parked rakishly, near the weather-beaten porch.

Before going to the door, Joe whispered to Freddie to remain quiet. In the silence and darkness, he pulled away two loose floor boards on the porch and deposited the suitcase. Sliding the boards into place, Joe continued to the door with Freddie beside him.

He knocked in two series. Twice; then three times. Frightened as he was, this secret knocking gave Freddie the thrill of his life. He had read all about that sort of thing in detective magazines. But now he was actually there! Not only that, but he had learned their secret knock!

THERE was other knocking, miles away, in the heart of Los Angeles. It was Charles Davis pounding his fist against the desk in his crowded office. Davis was the head of the Pacific coast division of the Department of Justice. The chief of the G-men.

From late afternoon the office had been a human cataract of Federal agents, news reporters, and policemen of every rank. It had been late afternoon before the raided armored-car had been discovered;

still later before the dying drivers had been rushed to the hospital; and night had fallen before the case had been reported to Davis' office.

Since then, Davis and his men had been like hounds in leash. They had stormed helplessly around the office as though caged. Ready to go; clamoring for action—yet they knew not where to strike. And that was why Davis was pounding emphasis of his words on his desk.

'If those armored-car men die without talking, we'll have lost our only chance to get the outfit who did this job." Davis directed special orders to his agents.

"Allen! Call the hospital and find out if Wilson has learned anything. Hemming! Order the men in the cars to widen their radius around the city. Stop all cars on the highways!"

Allen had kept up an almost steady phone connection from the office to the hospital since Wilson had gone there to talk to the wounded men. But he started to call again.

Hemming looked over to the huge wall map of Los Angeles county. He picked up the short-wave radio phone, contacted the G-men out on the highways, and moved them by changing the position of bright-headed pins in the wall map.

NERVOUSLY listening and watching Davis and his men, was a wealthy, well-dressed man of middle age. He was Frederick Martindale Vincent II—Freddie's father. He had arrived at Davis' office just before the hold-up report came through. Davis had tried, diligently, to explain to him that neither he nor the Department could do anything about his son.

It was not a kidnapping. The boy's note proved that. Freddie had simply run away. But Vincent couldn't understand. Even now, with Davis and his men almost ignoring him in their work on the hold-up, Vincent remained seated. He was hopelessly lost.

Suddenly, the office door burst open, and Wilson raced breathlessly over to Davis.

"We got something at last!" he gasped.

Instantly, he was surrounded by the entire group which had been waiting impatiently for some word.

"Out of all that driver's mumbling," the G-man fumbled through pages in his note book, "we got names like, Tony—Chi—and Joe—and Shorty—and Bud—and———"

"Sounds like the Salerno gang," Davis cut in. The others shouted their unanimous agreement.

"'Nother thing," Wilson added, "the driver said they used three cars and a truck—*and,* when the truck pulled away, he saw a boy and a dog in the back end!"

"That's him!" Vincent cried out. "He took the dog with him."

"That's all we got," Wilson finished.

This news set the office ablaze with noise and action. Running men; rattling machine-guns and rifles; telephones jangling; excited voices. Davis crossed to Hemming at the wall map. He called the others to his side.

As the G-men watched, Hemming's finger traced along a black ribbon of highway marked Route 101. Eyes followed it through suburban Los Angeles, across open country, and into South Mountain. There, Hemming's arm hesitated, then turned left off the highway onto a road which led to a little red square on the map. The agent's finger paused on the square, and he turned to his chief.

"This is the only place which ever gave evidence of being a hide-out of the Salerno mob."

"All right, men. You know what to do," Davis addressed them. "But be careful! There may be an eleven-year-old boy there, too. We don't want any harm to come to him."

With that brief instruction, the agents rushed out of the door and down to their waiting cars. For four hours they had been ready, waiting eagerly for the word to go. At last, they were under way and every second counted!

FROM his window, Davis watched his men drive away. He stood there a moment, thinking. He was trying to construct plans to trap Joe Salerno. He knew that after a big job, gangs often split up until things cooled off. They felt safer that way. Davis turned it all over in his mind before returning to Vincent.

The boy's father was excited with the hope that his boy had been seen, but he was in dread of what a mob like Salerno's would do to him. Helplessly sitting there, he wanted to help. He'd do anything.

"Mister Vincent," Davis spoke, "in four or five days, we may need your help. I've a feeling that this Salerno outfit has split up. We won't know that until my men return. But, if they are, they probably haven't divided that money. Now, if you will offer a substantial reward for your boy—say $50,000—some part of that mob will squeal, frame an alibi, and try to collect that reward."

"You mean they'll bring my boy to me?" Vincent asked.

"They'll try to find him. And at the same time we'll be trailing *them*. They find the boy, and we spring a surprise on them all."

Davis' plan was well devised. But there was one flaw in it. The Salerno mob had not split up. They were all to-

In the time they had been in the woods together, they had all become stanch friends.

gether at the old shack on South Mountain with their leader.

In the dimly lighted room, they were sprawled over the broken chairs and tables. Freddie had been locked in a back room upstairs. A room, under the eaves, from which there was no escape. It only contained one window, and that was boarded up.

They boy sat quietly on a rickety old bed. He could hear the men's voices downstairs, but he couldn't make out what they were saying. As the talking grew louder at times, Freddie thought there must be an argument. And he was right.

"What'd ya bring the kid here for?" It was Tony's voice.

"That's what I say," added several of the others.

"Shut up!" Joe ordered sharply. "I didn't bring him here. He was on the truck when I got here. And what'd you want me to do? Let him go, so he could tell the cops where you are?"

Joe's remarks quieted the mob, and started them thinking. No one spoke for a moment. Then Shorty asked, "What're ya goin' to do with the kid?"

"Some one's goin' to have to go upstairs and rock him to sleep." Joe's voice was calm and cold as steel, yet they all knew what he meant. Uneasily, they glanced around the room at each other. One of them would have to bump the kid off!

"ALL right, Bud!"

Joe's deadly terseness brought Bud to his feet.

Bud was a young fellow, only twenty. He seemed slighter and jumpier than the rest. His face suddenly paled with the realization of the brutal assignment his leader had just given him.

"You mean you're gonna——?"

"Do what I tell ya," Joe cut in abruptly.

"No! I ain't gonna do it!" Bud was backing away. "I ain't gonna have no baby murders hangin' over me! I ain't gonna——"

He didn't finish. Joe's fist crashed into his face and sent him backward over the couch.

The confusion in the room masked the noise of another struggle outside. Duke was trying to reach his master by jumping up on a lean-to which was connected with the back of the house.

Several times, unsuccessfully, he tried to leap onto the lean-to, but it was too high. Panting, resting, his head cocked at an angle, the dog surveyed his surroundings.

Then his eyes fell upon a pile of old boxes between the back porch and the lean-to. Instantly, he was on his way again. Up on the porch! Scramble over the boxes! A leap—and he landed on the lean-to! From there to the roof over Freddie's head was easy.

He sniffed cautiously, but knowingly. Then his paws began to scratch at the old weatherbeaten shingles. They were loose and worn. And before Duke's tearing claws, they fell away rapidly.

FREDDIE was startled by the noise overhead. As he looked up, a mask of fear covered his face. Suddenly, his expression changed. A smile lit up his face. He was so happy that tears came to his eyes. There, directly above him, was a new-made hole in the roof. And, nuzzling through it, sniffing uncertainly, was Duke's big black nose.

"Duke! Duke!" he half whispered, half cried. "Duke, old boy!"

That was enough. The claws moved faster and faster; and the shingles flew in all directions. Soon there was a hole big enough for Freddie to pull himself through.

Downstairs, Joe was watching the reaction to his argument with Bud. Nothing happened. The others knew that it wasn't wise nor healthy to cross their leader. The bloody and still uncon-

"You shouldn't be livin' out here —the nearest thing to a bath, a swim in a mountain pool."

scious Bud was a recent example. Joe spoke.

"Guess it's up to you, Tony."

"Okay, Joe." Tony swung his feet off the couch and started for the stairs. Halfway up he stopped and turned. "I want to talk to you when I come down, Joe."

Joe had been watching Tony closely, and he shot back his reply in a flash.

"Come here." Tony moved toward him. "Now, what's eatin' you?"

"When do I get a cut out of that dough? I got a split coming."

"Sure you have—when it cools off."

"We could split, and then wait, couldn't we?"

"We could," Joe agreed. Then he added sharply, "But we're not goin' to."

They stood there momentarily staring at each other. Silent. Then Tony shrugged his shoulders with an "Okay, Joe," and started back up the stairs. The rest of the mob shifted uneasily.

They had a split coming, too. But, if Tony called for a show down with Joe, they would all be divided. Some with Tony; some with their leader, the whole issue probably being settled with gun play.

They waited, tense, with their hands stealthily moving toward ready automatics. Suddenly, Tony came flying down the stairs again, shouting as he leaped.

"He's gone! The kid's gone!"

"GONE?" Joe repeated roughly. "What do you mean, gone?"

With three leaps he reached the top of the stairs and strode down the hall. A second later, he returned to the head of the stairs.

"He's gone all right."

Instantly, the others were on their feet, moving, and moving fast.

"C'mon, let's scram!" yelled Tony

"Yeah," Shorty shouted. "That kid'll go right to the cops!"

"Whichee clar we ride in?" shrilled Chi, in his best Chinese-American.

"Car nothin', Pigtails," Joe hollered

down. "You guys take that truck. You'll be safer. I'll take a car."

Joe wasn't in any hurry—that suitcase with the haul was still there. The others had forgotten that in their hasty get-away. As the truck trundled away from the house, Joe came downstairs and out onto the porch. Smiling, he waved a contemptuous salute after them.

Two other pairs of eyes welcomed the gang's departure. They were Freddie and Duke, who were huddled on the roof. The truck out of sight and sound, the boy believed it safe to enter the house again.

As Salerno retrieved his loot from under the porch, a thudding sound stopped him short—a thump on the floor inside the house. His eyes narrowed and his hand whipped out his automatic. Silently moving into the shadows beside the door, Joe was ready!

At last the door began to open from the inside. Fire and lead spurted from the gang leader's gun. It shot splintered wood into the air, and brought a scream from the inside.

Quickly, Joe sprang forward and kicked open the door. On the floor in front of him, Freddie lay prostrate over the form of his dog. For a moment there wasn't a sound. Then the boy looked up, sobbing hysterically.

"You've killed him! You've killed him!"

The floor around the dog's head was a mess of blood.

"WHERE'D *he* come from?" Joe asked.

"He was with me on the truck—and now he's dead." Freddie's tears tumbled down over his cheeks. Joe bent down.

"He's not dead."

"Honest? Oh, but he's dying. I'm going to get a doctor."

Freddie started to get up, but Joe pushed him back.

"Oh, no you don't."

"Please let me go. He'll die if I don't get——"

"Shut up!" Joe's voice was rough. "He'll be all right."

"No, he won't. Please let me go!" Freddie's heart was breaking. "You don't understand. I ran away because of Duke. He's the best friend I have in all the world—and now—now you won't even let me help him when he's dying."

"Quit squawkin'," Joe cut in. "Get me that pitcher of water."

While Freddie crossed to the table for the water, Joe removed Duke's collar and tossed it aside. With the water, Joe soaked his handkerchief and washed carefully around the dog's head. Freddie was trying to be brave, but he couldn't stop sobbing.

"I guess—maybe—you—had a dog—once—did you?"

"Yeah," Joe replied, as though remembering some distant past. "I had a swell collie. Some heel poisoned him."

For a brief moment, Joe was lost in dreams. He wasn't Joe Salerno, mob leader and public enemy. He was a boy at home again. But his reverie did not last long. He snapped out of it with a quick growl at Fred.

"Hey! We gotta get out of here."

"Please, mister! Please don't make me leave Duke! Please!"

The boy's tear-filled eyes and trembling lower lip stopped Joe in his tracks. There was silence. Slowly, Joe's ironclad features melted. He might have smiled, but he caught himself quickly, and froze up again.

"All right. We'll take him to a veterinary." Joe picked the dog up in his arms. "And now I don't want any more yelpin' out o' you!"

MIDNIGHT. As a radio played softly, Joe and Freddie were with Doctor Muhlback, in his Dog and Cat Hospital on the outskirts of Los Angeles. Duke lay on the table with a big patch over his head. But he was very much alive and alert.

"Will he be all right, Doctor?" Fred asked with great concern.

"*Ja! Ja!*" the doctor replied in his native tongue. "He iss like new."

"Can we take him now?" Joe was impatient.

"*Ja!*"

While Freddie helped Duke off the table and Joe counted out money for the "vet," the music on the radio halted abruptly.

"That court plaster, kid!" Joe ordered. "Quick!"

"Agents have found the dog's collar, smeared with blood, in——"

"*Nein, nein!*" the doctor protested as the gangster tore strips from the roll with his teeth. "Help! Police! He——"

Joe pushed the plaster across the "vet's" mouth. He wasn't losing a second!

"—old house on South Mountain, which is known to be a hide-out of the Salerno mob!"

Freddie managed to free himself enough to scream once.

"News flash!" the announcer broke in. "Young Freddie Vincent, heir to the Vincent millions, who disappeared from home early this afternoon with his police dog, Duke, is believed by the G-men to have fallen into the hands of the Salerno mob——"

Joe's gun pressed against the doctor's stomach!

"—which is implicated in the hold-up——"

"Sit down!" Joe slammed Muhlback into a chair.

"—carrying United States currency from the airport to——"

"That roll of bandages!" Joe called again. "Scissors! Cut!"

"—of Justice asks all doctors and veterinarians to be on the lookout for an injured police dog——"

Joe hurriedly bound the doctor to the chair. As he finished, he wheeled around and sent his fist crashing into the radio. It tumbled, silent, to the floor. As he moved on toward the door, police sirens screamed from the highway out front, bringing him to an abrupt halt.

PEERING out from behind the window shade, Joe saw headlights beam down the road from a small coupé. If that was all, Joe thought, escape would be easy. Two men were walking up the walk. Joe recognized them at once; Department of Justice agents Wilson and Hemming!

"Out the back door!" he shouted, pushing Freddie and Duke in front of him. Joe had been smart enough to drive his car to the back of the house out of view from the highway.

"Lie down in the back," Joe whispered to Fred. "And keep that dog down there with you."

Joe's foot nudged the starter, and the motor purred softly. With lights out, the car shot across the lawn, smashed through the small wood fence, and raced down the road. When he finally switched on the lights, the speedometer registered 67 and was accelerating higher.

Freddie found the back seat as uncomfortable as the truck had been. He rolled from side to side as Joe swung wildly around the treacherous curves. Constantly, Joe's eyes roved between the road ahead and his rear-vision mirror.

Suddenly, headlights reflected in the mirror! The coupé with the G-men had got under way sooner than Joe expected. Pressing down harder on the throttle, Joe skidded around the next curve at 78. Then, for a moment they were out of sight of the coupé, and a hundred yards away loomed a side road.

In the rear, Freddie heard the brakes screech and felt the car lurch and bolt. It almost turned over. When it righted itself, Joe had successfully turned into the side road with his headlights out. It was only seconds until the siren-shrieking coupé shot past the side road, screaming away down the highway. Slowly, he backed the get-away car onto the broad highway again, and started back in the opposite direction, toward South Mountain.

A HALF hour of hard driving found them winding up the well-paved road around the mountain. Joe was still taking the curves as fast and recklessly as he had in the valley. Freddie was really scared now—not at the speed, but at the sheer drop of hundreds of feet at the edge of the road. One heedless moment on Joe's part, and they would plunge headlong into the chasm!

As they swung out around one curve, lights suddenly flashed from the top of the mountain. With a snarling curse, Joe jerked the car to an abrupt stop.

"What's the matter?" Freddie asked.

"Cops!" Joe answered. "Plenty of them! About a mile up there."

Hurriedly, Salerno turned the car around and headed back down the mountain. Once more he slowed down. There were lights glaring from the roadway below, too! Somehow, he knew, he had driven into a trap set by the Federal agents. The heat was on!

"When I stop," he yelled back to Freddie, "you and the dog jump!"

Joe's foot braked the car to a stop, and the boy and his dog jumped out. Releasing the brake, Joe rode the car until it picked up speed. Then he, too, opened the door, and jumped out.

When he got back with Fred and Duke, the car was careening wildly down the winding mountain highway. They watched it as it raced, out of control, from one side of the road to the other, toward the first curve. With a shattering din, it crashed into the mountain wall. Like a thing alive, it bounced back, lurched upward into the air, then hurtled down over the precipice. Silence. Then a crashing, far-off roar.

FIVE days had passed. For almost a week, Joe, Freddie, and Duke had been living in an old cave deep in the heart of the mountains. It had been a hard crude existence. They had to work hard to get enough food to eat, the nights were cold, and Joe had to be ever on the lookout for the police and G-men.

But in the time they had been in the

woods together, they had all become stanch friends. Freddie shared the work, and even Duke carried wood for the fire.

It was night, and they were stretched out around the last embers of their fire, looking up at the stars. As they lay there, Joe looked over at Fred. Like his own, he saw the boy's clothes almost in shreds, torn by the thorns of the woods. Joe turned back to the stars before he spoke.

"Y'know, Freddie, this ain't the kind of a life for a kid like you." Joe's voice was different now, more kindly; and his whole manner had undergone reform. He was no longer rough and hard. A week with the boy and the dog had made him gentle and thoughtful.

"You shouldn't be livin' out here on rabbits, and berries, and—whatever we can find—sleepin' here in the open every night—the nearest thing to a bath, a swim in a mountain pool. Yes, and that ain't the half of it, kid——"

"Gee, Joe, I don't mind—if the cops don't find us!"

"That's just it. I may have to stay out here for weeks. So, you better go back to town to-morrow."

"No," Freddie protested. "I'm going to stick it out with you."

"Okay," Joe smiled to himself. "But let's get some sleep."

"Good night, Joe."

Joe yawned. "Good night, kid."

Freddie fell off to sleep long before Joe. Salerno was thinking. He wondered what the rest of the mob were doing. They were hiding in town, he knew that. But he wondered how they felt about the undivided money.

And while he was lying out there, half asleep in the open, the rest of the boys were in town, and quite awake. They were a disgruntled lot, sitting around in two small rooms facing the Los Angeles waterfront. But their interest had been aroused by a copy of the *Times*, which screamed a headline across page one:

VINCENT OFFERS $50,000 REWARD
FOR SON!

"—AND if you guys don't want to go in with me, all right." It was Tony who was talking. "I'll go by myself. I can use fifty grand. We won't get nothin' outta Joe. He's had plenty of time to 'stash' that dough so's we'll never find it—the dirty, double-crossin' rat!"

After thinking a moment, the others, one by one, agreed to go in with Tony.

"But," Shorty asked, "do you know where to find the kid?"

Tony curled up his lip. "Salerno might be foolin' the cops, but he ain't foolin' me. He's after an extra bit of change, now. He's got that kid with him, and I know where he's hidin' out!"

"You mean that place we used after the Burrow's job?" Bud asked.

"Yeah," Tony replied. "So let's get goin'."

The next morning, Joe and Freddie were up with the sun. They had a shower under a falls in the mountain stream; Fred had had a fishing lesson but no fish; and now they were following Duke along the path back toward the cave. Breakfast was next, but as yet they had nothing for it.

"Kid," Joe spoke, "you and Duke go on back and pick some of those berries outside the cave. I'm goin' over here and find a rabbit for us."

"That'll be swell, Joe," Freddie replied. "Hurry up. I'm hungry."

They parted company, and Freddie ambled back through the woods to the cave. The cave was partially hidden by the berry bushes, which made it a protected hide-out for them. With Duke looking on, Fred began to fill his cap with the red berries.

Suddenly, he was attracted by a low warning growl from the dog. Turning around, Freddie stared into the face of Tony. Then others appeared out of the surrounding bushes—Bud, Shorty, Chi, all the mob that had been at the house on South Mountain!

"We're going to take you home," Tony started in.

"You leave me alone!" Freddie exclaimed.

"Take him, boys!" Tony ordered the others.

Chi started toward the boy. His arm reached out, but never touched him. Duke, teeth bared, leaped and caught the Chinaman's throat. As they rolled to the ground, Shorty and Bud grabbed Freddie and started off down the hill with him. Freddie managed to free himself enough to scream once.

A shot sounded through the woods—Joe's signal that he was on his way. At the same instant, Duke left the torn and bloody Chi and was off after Freddie and his abductors.

Panting and gasping, Joe reached the cave. His first sight was that of an outstretched figure on the ground. It was Chi—Chi, with blood spurting from gashes in his throat and face, made there by frantic animal fangs. But there was no Freddie, no Duke, no one! Joe grabbed the half-breed Chinaman and shook him relentlessly.

"What have they done with that kid? Where is he? D'ya hear? Where is he?"

"Tony—he glot—kid," moaned the semiconscious Oriental.

"Where is he?" Joe shrieked again. He got no reply. But another voice spoke directly behind him.

"Put 'em up, Joe! And drop that gun!"

Slowly, Joe's arms went upward, the gun falling to the ground, and he turned around. He was face to face with Wilson, Hemming, Allen, and a dozen other G-men! Joe Salerno, notorious bandit and killer, was a prisoner of the law!

IT was afternoon when the Federal men brought Joe and Chi back to headquarters. Davis questioned Joe for an hour, but received little information about the boy. Vincent, Sr., was called in to appeal to Joe, but Joe had nothing to say. It was truth he spoke. He *didn't* know where Tony and the mob had Freddie.

The grilling was interrupted by a motorcycle policeman, who reported finding a dog up the highway near the old box factory. Davis ordered that the dog be brought in. In an instant, Duke leaped into the office and almost into Joe's lap. His tail flapped wildly, and his big red tongue licked Joe's hand. All the time, Duke was emitting a pleading whine.

"That's the kid's dog," Joe stated sulkily. "And if you picked him up near that box factory, I know where to find the kid, too.

"Where?" Davis asked.

"Let me walk out of here alone," Joe continued, "and I'll have the kid back here in half an hour. Oh, I'll come back—I promise that. But let me go, before that mob kills the kid!"

Davis turned a deaf ear to Joe's appeal. Freddie's father frantically asked that an exception be made in Joe's case. Davis was firm in his refusal. He conferred in whispers with Wilson and Hemming, and ended by saying:

"Take Salerno back, and lock him up!"

Joe had to be dragged out of the office. At the door, he made his last stand, shouting back to Davis at the top of his lungs: "Killer! Killer!"

Vincent was enraged at the G-man's callousness toward his boy's life. He demanded Joe's release, threatened Davis' position, and put through a telephone call to the Treasury Department in Washington. As the millionaire stormed at the phone, Wilson returned.

"Everything worked out as you planned, chief. Everything's fine."

"What do you mean?" Vincent raged, " 'Everything's fine'!"

Davis calmly took the phone from his

hand. "Forget about this call, and I'll explain, Mister Vincent. You see, officially, I couldn't release Salerno. But—if he escaped—well, I couldn't very well help that, could I?" Davis was smiling.

"You mean you let him escape?" Vincent calmed down.

"Publicly, no. But between the three of us, yes. My men, of course, are following every move he makes. And if you want to come along with us, I wouldn't be surprised if you had your boy back in even less time than Salerno mentioned."

DAVIS was right, for Joe wasn't losing any time at all. In a stolen police car, which had been left unguarded deliberately, he and Duke had driven up the highway to the old deserted box factory. As they got out of the car, Joe called to the dog.

"Duke! Find Freddie! Find Freddie!"

Duke nosed the ground and then suddenly struck a scent. Joe, gun drawn, followed closely. They went back of the box factory, across the rubbish heap, to an old unused canal. Here, at the water's edge, Duke halted, but he sniffed the air in the direction of an old barge, landlocked on the canal.

This confirmed Joe's suspicions. Back in Davis' office, when he had said he could find the boy, he was thinking of this barge behind the factory. Joe, himself, had used it as a hide-out many times.

After a brief instant's hesitation, Duke plunged into the water and started to swim out. Wading up to his waist, Joe followed. Alongside the barge he heard voices, and through a window he recognized Tony, Shorty, and the rest of the outfit. But there was no sign of Freddie. However, Duke soon attracted him to a small hole, above the water line, at the bow of the boat.

It was impossible to see through the blackness inside, but Joe took a chance, and whispered, "Freddie, it's Joe!"

"I'm here," a whisper came back. It was Freddie!

"Stay there and keep quiet," Joe ordered. "I'll get you out."

Joe grabbed a piece of floating wood, waded to the back of the barge where the cabin entrance was, and climbed up. Quickly, he threw the piece of wood forward, so that it struck the bow.

Flashing guns, the men in the cabin leaped toward the sound. They stopped short when Joe's voice boomed out behind them.

"Stick 'em high in the air, boys! The party's over!"

THEN Joe fired orders in rapid succession. "Don't turn around! Throw your fireworks on the floor! Tony! Unlock that door to the forward cabin!"

His commands were obeyed, and soon Freddie ran out to Joe's side. After tossing the assortment of guns out of the window, Joe and the boy jumped into the water on their way ashore. Duke waited at the door of the cabin and growled threateningly when any of the gang moved. Then, seeing his master and Joe safely on shore, the dog plunged in after them.

On the bank, the pair were met by Davis, Vincent, and a whole host of G-men. A moment later, Duke crawled up the slimy bank. As Freddie knelt down to pat the dog, a shot rang out from the barge. Joe shuddered, grasped his heart, and sank to the ground. He had got the bullet marked for the boy!

Freddie knew what had happened. Crouched beside Joe, he tried to hold back the tears. But suddenly the dam broke and he sobbed bitterly. Joe reached up and ran his hand through Freddie's hair. His eyes filled and he smiled, "Gee, kid—we had a—swell time fishin'—didn't we?"

His hand slowly fell away. Joe Salerno was dead.

Dangerous Intrigue

Stronger than the steel which scattered death and destruction, this doctor overcame fear and fate!

BENEATH the murk of saffron and slate-gray smoke that made a permanent smudge against the Pennsylvania hills, a great noise arose, day and night, and, periodically, a great geyser of flame cut into the sky. The noise, the flame, the huddle of grimy buildings, the labyrinth of railroad tracks and trestles—all these were the Crocker Steel Works.

At one end of the mill yard, a crane with a lifting magnet dumped scrap iron from a truck onto the huge, rustling pile. At the foot of it, men in overalls mechanically heaved scrap into the charging boxes that a roaring crane had lifted onto the buggies that would carry them up an inclined track to the furnaces.

At the furnaces, sweating, helmeted men guided the loaded charging boxes into the dump, piloted the ladle cranes, prepared the huge sand ingot moulds.

In the office of General Superintendent Koenig, sat three sober-faced men. One, a huge Slavic workman with an intelligent face and powerful physique, was red with distress. He pushed the melter's glasses a little farther up on his forehead, and explained anxiously:

"Number 6, she joost getting ready for tap out the heat, boss, when the seal break. I run feex, but hot steel come too fast!"

Koenig shook his head. "This is the third serious accident to your crew in two weeks, Kosovic. You know you're responsible."

"I check everything," Joe Kosovic told him urgently. "I don't know how go wrong."

Koenig looked questioningly at the third man. "Well, Brant?" he said. "You're safety agent."

Brant, heavy-featured and faintly sneering, answered him skeptically.

"You can take my word for it, E. K., there's negligence at the bottom of every one of these accidents."

Kosovic leaned forward with an angry flash of eyes. "Leesten, Meester Koenig," he said earnestly, "feefteen year I work dis mill. First brake shed, then furnace helper, now melter boss. Long time never any accident."

"I know all that," Koenig admitted.

"You ought to," Brant interposed, unpleasantly. "He gave you the same song and dance last week when that crane dropped a ladle."

Koenig frowned a little. "Joe," he said, soberly, "I'm going to give you one more chance. Get back to your job and turn out steel like you used to!"

JOE scrambled to his feet.

"Dank you, Meester Koenig," he said happily, already halfway out the door. "I show you dis time, you betcha!"

"You don't pick up steel men like that every day, Brant," Koenig said, watching the man stride across the yard to the furnaces. "That fellow was born in an open hearth."

Brant smiled unpleasantly and strolled out, down the yard toward the scrap heap. A whole line of loaded buggies was overturned, and the foreman was yelling frantically at a workman Brant had never seen before. Evidently, the fellow had hooked the crane onto the floor of the buggy instead of to the empty charging box. He stood looking dazedly at the foreman.

"I'm afraid I can't do this type of work," he offered.

"You're telling me!" the foreman exploded.

"It's my hands——" the man said vaguely, staring down at the cramped, slender fingers of his grimed hands. He glanced up at the foreman with a look of struggling bewilderment.

"I—I might injure them in some way," he murmured, as if he himself were not quite sure why that mattered.

The foreman roared with rage, and Brant with laughter.

"Have a heart, Ed!" he called. "Can't you see the guy's just had a manicure?"

"Get out of here, quick!" the foreman roared. "Go down to the shanty and get your slip! You're fired!"

The man started slowly out—the wrong way—and Brant gave him a contemptuous shove in the right direction.

He walked, shuffling, across the yards. In the furnace building, Joe Kosovic, back on the job, was superintending the small crew tapping out a heat of steel. Slowly, the great ladle flowed full of the blazing hot steel. Wiping the sweat from his face with his forearm, he waved a signal to the man on the ladle crane. Swaying, flaming with white heat, the brimming ladle swung across the huge

THE CAST

RALPH BELLAMY	Tony
GLORIA SHEA	Gerta
Fred Kohler	Brant
Fredrik Vogeding	Joe Kosovic
Edward Le Saint	Dr. Miller

Directed by David Selman
Story by Harold Shumate
Screenplay by Grace Neville

A fictionization of the Columbia picture of the same title.

room toward the waiting moulds. Pushing it gently with long rods, the helmeted workmen guided it into position above the first mould. Again Joe signaled, and a workman pulled a lever. A flaming ribbon of molten steel rippled down to the waiting mould. As it struck the sand, a blinding explosion sent a geyser of hot steel spraying in all directions. Screaming with terror and anguish, the men jumped back in a vain effort to escape the rain of death!

"SIGN here," said the timekeeper. "Four hours work," and the fired workman bent over mechanically to sign his name. What was his name? Oh, yes, Davis—George Davis. A siren screamed, and the timekeeper turned.

"Three!" he yelled excitedly to some one behind. "That's the furnace building!" He tossed a check to the man named Davis and bolted across the yard.

Indifferently, check in hand, the man shuffled out. Two men came out of the furnace building, carrying a stretcher, and he paused listlessly to watch them, as they walked quickly toward a small, wooden building near by. Over its door was lettered:

HOSPITAL

Listlessness vanished from his face. For a second he frowned painfully, then impulsively started forward, pushing through the crowd of men into the building.

When the mill doctor came in, the man was finishing bandaging the third accident victim.

"What's happened here?" puffed Doctor Miller, and the man said briefly: "Third-degree burns. I've put on tanic acid applications."

The doctor bent over the bandage the other was completing. "Hm-m-m," he said, "and a very good job, too. You know a thing or two about medicine."

The man's hands paused suddenly, and he straightened up, to look about him in bewilderment. Nothing here made sense—only the job under his hands was real. Mechanically he finished the dressing and turned, shaking his head groggily. He walked to the door of the outer room and looked around, as if he were seeing it for the first time. Shakily, he found a chair and sat down.

Things were becoming clearer now. The veil that had hung between his consciousness and the rest of the world was lifting. Now, for the first time in—how long?—he knew that he was no common laborer. He knew, too, that his name was not really George Davis.

No! He was Doctor Anthony Halliday, famous surgeon and chief of staff—no, that wasn't right—ex-chief of staff at the John Mitchell Memorial Hospital in New York City.

He supposed that he had been hit by a sudden attack of amnesia, wiping out the images of his mind as a result of brain fatigue, brought on by his last tumultuous days at the hospital. What he had done, where he had gone in this fog of unconsciousness, he could not remember. But he was sure of one thing about where he was now:

He liked it!

Doctor Miller was talking to him.

"Why—yes, of course, doctor. Thank you, I'd—I'd like to stay and help you here. My name? It's Davis. George Davis——"

ON the day when Joe Kosovic went back to work in the mills, Tony met him outside the yard gates after work. It would have been hard to recognize Tony as the same lost and unkempt wanderer who had straggled into the Crocker Mills two weeks before. Perhaps equally hard to find any trace of Doctor Tony Halliday, the overworked chief of the John Mitchell staff. For this man, to whom the workmen yelled friendly greetings as he passed, was not only clear-eyed and handsome, but eager-looking and happy.

Joe was glum. After all his years in

the mill, he had been demoted to pushing a wheelbarrow on a yard crew. That last accident had been one too many.

Tony walked along with him through the dusk to the little unpainted house that stood with many others like it in the shabby street. At the yard gate, a girl waited for Joe, and the big man's face lighted proudly as he introduced Tony to his daughter, Gerta.

Joe's worried face relaxed in a big grin. "All time she boss me joost like that!" he told Tony proudly. "What you tink about my Gerta, huh? You ever see more pretty girl?"

Tony glanced over, smiling. Honest eyes, steady mouth, shining hair——

"If I have," he answered Joe, "I don't remember where," and the flush deepened in Gerta's cheeks.

"Have a heart, Ed! . . . Can't you see the guy's just had a manicure?"

Almost before he knew it, Tony was inside, eating supper with them. Joe's bragging was justified—Gerta *was* a good cook. Tony felt suddenly warmed and happy, sitting with them in the lamplight of the shabby room, well fed and friendly.

In the midst of the meal, Joe burst out suddenly: "I got it, by gollies! Somebody feex 'em up so furnace break!"

"Now, dad," Gerta soothed him, "not another word about that mill to-night! You finish your dinner!"

Tony carried the warmth of that evening back to the mill with him the next day. He thought of it as he walked about the yards, watching the little dinky cars rattle their load of scrap along to the furnaces, standing at a respectable distance to watch the furnace crews tap out a heat of steel or the giant cranes swing the great, glowing ingots up out of their sand moulds.

He was thrilled with the mills, and worried, too. For that day, another accident occurred. The rung of a ladder suddenly gave way, and the workman, grabbing frantically at air, went plunging to the ground.

AFTER Tony had fixed the man up, and had the hospital shack in order again, he walked back into the yard. The men were on lunch hour, and as they smoked and lounged, they listened with sober faces to one of their number who stood and spoke to them passionately. Only an occasional question or murmur of approval interrupted him, and Tony listened, fascinated, wishing he could understand the rapid Hungarian.

Brant, the mill's safety agent, strolled up.

"Well, doctor," he asked, his heavy voice edged with contempt, "are you getting used to the steel mills?"

Tony jerked his head toward the speaker. "What's all the excitement?"

Brant shrugged. "Oh, just a superstitious workman trying to stir up some trouble."

"What about?"

Brant turned to a shifty-eyed workman who stood near. "What's he saying now?" he asked.

"He say all workmen better quit," Zivok answered dully. "Too many accidents. Bad luck this mill. Workman's check no good to him dead."

Brant laughed scornfully. "Bad luck!" he snorted. "Just their own dumb carelessness!"

"In every case?" Tony asked. He was thinking of Joe, a good and careful workman if ever there was one.

"Sure," Brant said. "I'm safety and personnel agent for the mill. I investigate them all. But you can't reason with them lunkheads. They don't talk United States."

Tony frowned worriedly. That man with flashing eyes and eloquent voice who was holding his audience spellbound there might not talk United States, but he didn't look dumb.

"Can't the mills make stricter safety rules?" he asked Brant, and the big man grinned sarcastically.

"What would *you* suggest?"

Tony shrugged helplessly. After all, he'd never seen a steel mill until two weeks ago, but still it didn't seem necessary—— "I don't know," he admitted. "They might begin by investigating all their workmen——"

"Well, now, that ain't such a bad idea, doctor," Brant's voice became suddenly nasty. "I think myself they oughta investigate before they hire some 'greener' that never saw the inside of a steel mill before"—he glanced at Tony significantly—"and find out where he comes from."

He strolled away, and Tony stared after him for a minute, dislike and trouble clouding his eyes.

ONE clear Sunday, Tony and Gerta took a picnic lunch, and climbed into the hills, high above the smoke and noise and dinginess of the mill town streets. It was a glorious day for them—one of the most delightful Tony could remember—and his memory of things past was with him again in all its former keenness. But for some reason which he himself could not explain, he preferred to be known around the mill as just plain "Doc Davis."

On the way back into town, they almost stumbled over a boy trudging toward them through the dusk.

"Why, Danny!" Gerta exclaimed, and leaned down to him. Danny, with his cap yanked down and a sweater tucked under his arm, glared at them and tried his best to get away, kicking and jerking.

He was one of Gerta's first-graders, and she knew from past experience that he was running away from home. Between them they managed to persuade him to go back. By the time they got all the way across town to his house, the boy was fast asleep in Tony's arms.

To Tony's surprise, the man who

opened the cottage door to Gerta's knock was Brant. He scowled when he saw the boy.

"I told that kid of mine he couldn't go to the movies to-night! You had a nerve to take him!"

Tony had a hard time controlling his temper.

"He hasn't been to any movie," Tony told him sharply. "We picked him up on the far side of town, headed for the great open spaces."

Worried concern replaced the scowl on Brant's face. "He wasn't—running away again?"

Tony set the sleeping boy down on his feet. "Just lost his way, I guess," he said diplomatically, and was surprised at the tenderness with which Brant stooped to steady the staggering kid.

"Thanks for bringing him home," Brant said finally. "I'm sure glad you ran into him." He turned from them into the house, half carrying the boy. "We'll go to the movies to-morrow night, son," they heard him promise.

Tony shook his head in amazement as they walked down the path. "I hardly recognized him in the rôle of father," he said.

When the mill doctor came in, he was finishing bandaging the third victim.

NEXT morning, Tony and Doctor Miller were disturbed in their work at the hospital shack by footsteps and terrific pounding on the roof. "Putting new tar paper on the roof," Miller explained in answer to Tony's question.

Suddenly the mill siren shrilled through the din of hammers on the roof.

"Another accident!" Miller cried. "That's the fourth this week!"

Tony walked quickly to the door, looking out at men running across the yard. "Five——" he counted the siren blasts. "That's the brake shed, isn't it?" He turned quickly back into the door, then gave a startled yell as something hurtled past him. A heavy roll of tar paper, falling from the roof, had barely missed him as he turned.

"What's the idea?" he shouted at the two men on the roof.

One was Zivok, the man who had interpreted for Brant and Tony in the mill yard. The other man was speechless with terror, but his scared glance at Zivok placed the guilt.

Doctor Miller was red with rage. "You trying to kill somebody around here?" he shouted. "Who let that fall?" He glared at Zivok. "What've you got to say?"

Zivok stared back at him. "No savvy," he said with an insolent, indifferent shrug. "Just—accident."

Miller snorted, and turned back into the hospital, to care for the man who was being brought in on a stretcher. "Accident," he muttered. "Awful lot of accidents around here. Gonna cost somebody his job!"

Evidently the insurance company shared Doctor Miller's feeling about the number of accidents in the Crocker Steel Works. For that week, Koenig, the superintendent, called a hasty meeting of his executives.

"Gentlemen," he said, "Mr. Brant—if the insurance company takes this stand, it means closing down the mill! We can't operate under common law. Without the protection of State compensation limits, one or two suits would finish us."

"That's right," Brant agreed calmly.

"If there isn't a general walk-out first," the assistant manager said, slowly. "We've never had such a run of accidents in the history of the mill! The men are getting panicky!"

Koenig drew a deep breath. "I'm beginning to wonder if they *are* accidents," he said, and the other men stared at him. "My opinion is they've been deliberately planned—the work of some one trying to gum things up around here!"

"Bunk!" Brant snorted. "This mill is bread and butter to the men. Who'd want to wreck it?"

"Well," the superintendent said, "some one taking orders from the Irvington Steel outfit, for instance. They've been trying to buy this mill for a year, and we've turned down all their offers. They'd go to any length to wreck us—to get us in a hole so we'd have to sell out cheap. Brant," he said with sudden decision, "it's your job to find out who's doing it!"

"All right, E. K.," Brant said with an easy laugh. "But if you ask me, you're letting your imagination run away with you."

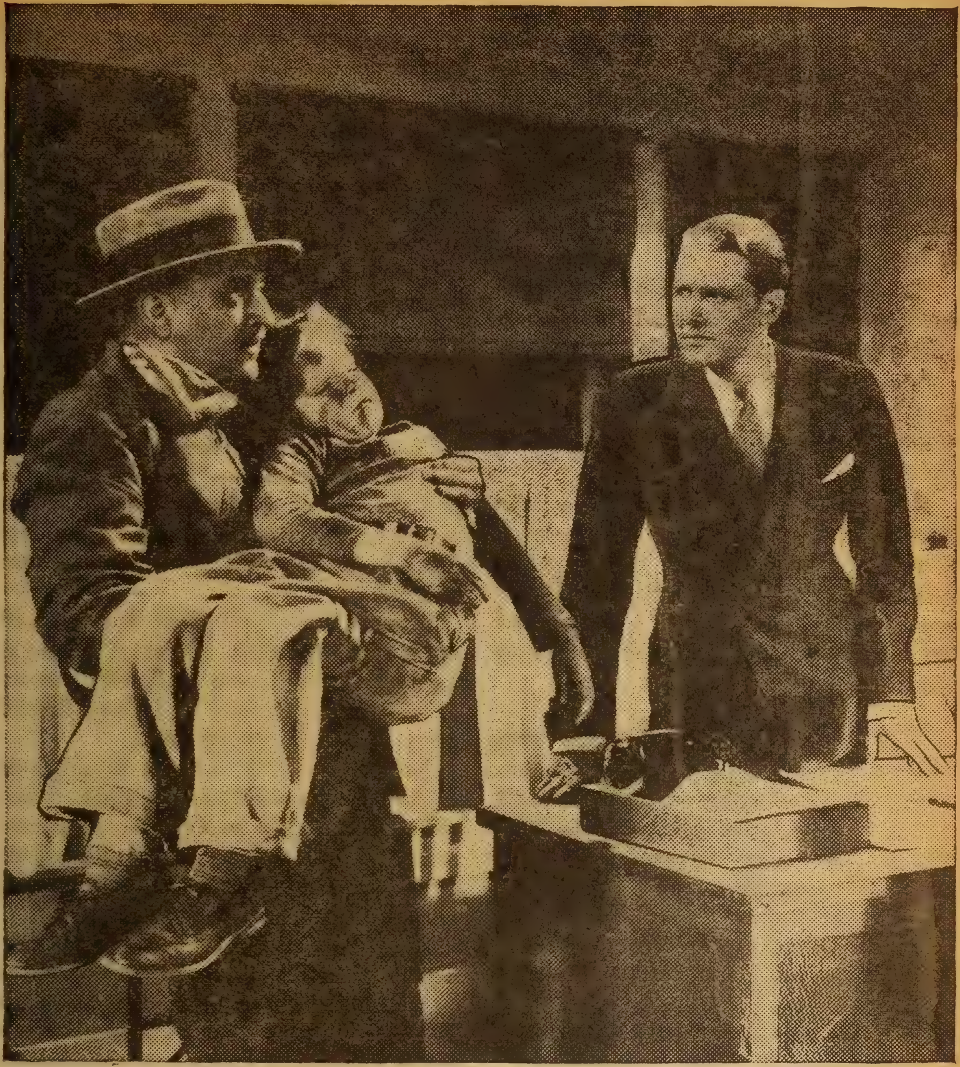
AS Gerta walked from school the next day, thinking idly of the mill dance that was to be held that night, she jumped back, startled. A brick had hurtled over the playground wall and shattered at her feet! Hastily she walked around to the gate and went into the yard. The children looked up from their game, and their shouts died as Gerta demanded sternly:

"Who threw that brick over the fence?"

In the silence, Danny Brant drew a big breath and summoned courage.

"I did," he blurted.

Gerta frowned at him. "Don't you know you could kill some one that way?"



The brakeman brings Danny's crushed body to the mill hospital.
(A scene from the picture.)

"We was just playing a game," he said defensively.

"What game?"

There was a chorused answer. "Steel mill!"

"Well, you don't have to go dropping bricks on people, do you?" Gerta asked.

"Sure you do," Danny explained, warming up. "That's the way you play it."

He gestured proudly to a contraption rigged from a plank, some rope, and a carpenter's horse. "This here's the crane in the rolling mill. And these bricks are really steel. They weigh tons and tons. Then you do something that fixes the crane wrong and the brick falls on somebody, and they can't get insurance. See?"

In sudden panic, Gerta shook him by the shoulder. "Danny!" she said tensely.

"Where did you learn to play a game like that? Who taught you?"

Caution, stubbornness, crept into the child's face. "I won't tell you," he said sullenly.

With swift decision Gerta started for Tony's boarding house. Hurriedly, she told him the story, and he shook his head in bewilderment.

"It doesn't seem possible that Brant could be involved," he said doubtfully. "We can't do much until we're sure."

"I'm afraid of what the mill workers would do if they found out," Gerta suggested. "They'd start killing left and right!"

He nodded. "I'll get them to take double precautions in the rolling mill. If an accident happens to the big crane in the next few days, we'll know Brant is at the bottom of all this." He pressed her hands reassuringly. "I'll see you at the dance to-night."

BUT the dance was well under way, and Tony had not put in an appearance. While she was dancing with Brant, Gerta saw him come in the door, and her face lighted. He came across the room to them, and she said, warmly:

"You came after all!"

He nodded soberly. "I'm on my way back to the hospital. There's been another accident." Tony's eyes were steadily on Brant's scowling face.

"What—was it?" Gerta stammered.

Tony gazed steadily at Brant. "An electric crane broke while it was lifting a heavy load," he said levelly. "I'm not sure we can save the man who was caught under it!"

"Whew!" Brant said. "That's awful!"

"Yes," Tony said. "Awful."

Brant's gaze shifted a little from his fixed stare. "Where did it happen?" he asked nervously.

"Don't you know?" Tony asked quietly.

Brant's little eyes narrowed. "What do you mean by that crack?" he blazed. "No one could be as dumb as you're acting around this town, Davis. Watch your step, or you'll run into trouble!"

"You mean—something might fall on me?" Tony suggested.

Brant moved toward him menacingly, and Gerta instinctively stepped between them.

"Keep outta this," Brant said, pushing her roughly aside. "You're causing enough talk the way you go to this guy's room."

Tony flushed. "Be careful, Brant," he warned.

Brant laughed sneeringly. "She's just another milltown——" he began. He had the rest of the insult knocked down his throat by a quick upward blow that filled his mouth with blood from a bitten tongue.

The music trailed off as Brant roared out a surprised oath. Quickly he caught his balance and came back with a rush. A wide circle formed, and Tony danced away from Brant's big fists.

In Crocker Mill town, it would have occurred to no one to stop a fight. They yelled delightedly as Tony's quick, hard punches cut Brant's mouth, blackened his eyes and sent him crashing backward onto the floor.

Slowly he picked himself up, his face contorted with rage at the derisive yells.

"Listen, you guys," he roared. "This is your fight, not mine!" He pointed a finger at Tony. "That guy there's behind all your trouble at the mill!"

Instant silence fell, and the circle moved closer. Stuttering with anger, but making his meaning clear, Brant reminded them that their trouble at the mill had been going on just about as long as Tony had been there. The Slavic faces grew dark with belief and resentment. Tony saw the gleam of knives in the closing circle!

"That's a lie!" Tony shouted. "I'm trying to help you. You'll find out when the time comes. Now I've got to get back to the hospital to take care of an injured man."

He started for the door, but an angry murmur rose, and a big Czech with a long knife stepped across his path. "What you know about accident?" he demanded, ominously.

A big arm spun the man around and out of the way, and Joe Kosovic stepped between Tony and the threatening mob.

"Whassa matta?" he shouted furiously. "You all crazy? Doctor my friend! Friend every man here! Any man fight him, he fight Joe Kosovic."

He stared around the circle and grew angrier. "Come on," he yelled, "I take *ten* men, all one time!"

No one moved, and Joe grinned as suddenly as he had scowled.

"O. K. doc," he said. "I tink you go hospital now."

"Thanks, Joe," Tony said briefly, and hurried out.

OUT another door went Brant. With long strides he went toward his house and into Danny's bedroom.

"Danny!" he shook the sleeping boy. "Did you talk to any one about what you heard when you came in where we were talking last night?"

Danny sat up blinking. "Huh?" he muttered.

"When you heard us talking—about the mill? Did you tell any one about it?"

"No, Pop," he said. "I didn't. Honest."

"Sure?" Brant insisted.

The boy shook his head emphatically. "Sure, pop. My teacher wanted to know, and I wouldn't tell her."

"You mean Gerta!" Brant said sharply. Then Gerta and Doc Davis did suspect! He sat still for a moment, thinking rapidly, his face grim.

"Listen, Danny," he told the boy urgently. "I'm going out for a while. When I get back, we're leaving here. You get up and get your clothes on and wait for me."

"Where you going, pop?" Danny said curiously. "Kin I go with you?"

"No!" Brant snapped. "You stay here and keep quiet! You'll probably land us both in jail yet," he muttered as he went swiftly out.

Jail! Danny's lower lip trembled. "Pop!" he called, and slid out of bed. He could hear his father's footsteps down the walk. He ran to the window. The big man was walking, fast, toward the railroad tracks.

Trembling, sobbing, Danny pulled on his clothes. He didn't want to go to jail. He knew the way to the tracks.

Running stubbornly, Danny started toward the tracks. There was a fence, but he climbed that, and picked himself up, whimpering, from the tumble on the other side. He looked around. Gee, the yards were big, and dark, in spite of lights swung here and there!

A switch train was pushing dinkies. The brakeman swung his lantern and the train moved toward a siding. Danny's heart suddenly leaped with hope. There was a man walking near the track—a big man!

"Pop!" he called. "Hi! Pop!"

The man turned, surprised at hearing a child's voice, and started toward the boy.

It was not his pop. Danny's heart thudded in utter terror. Turning, he ran, stumbling blindly across the jumble of tracks. The man yelled, but Danny was too frightened to hear that he yelled "Look out!" or that there was the growing noise of the dinky locomotive, chugging rapidly down the siding!

The brakeman's lantern swung frantically, and the air brakes screamed. Danny hadn't even time to see the locomotive's headlight before it hit him, rolling him down the little embankment beside the track!

Horrified, the men tumbled off the train. In the lantern light, the tears of terror were still wet on Danny's face, his little hands still clenched. The locomotive whistle screamed into the night, summoning help.

BRANT, entering a shack beside the railroad yards, heard that whistle and paused a moment before he entered. He dismissed it, and went swiftly to the point of his mission.

"That last job's got to be done tonight, Slevski," he told the workman who sat listening in the flickering lamplight. "They're closing in on us."

"The south furnace?"

"Yeah," said Brant tensely. "Now, get this. I don't want any slip-up. You'll find an acetylene tank back in the yard where they've been burning that scrap. Watch your chance. Slip it in one of the charging boxes on the way to the furnace."

Slevski released a barrage of startled Hungarian profanity.

"Five minutes later, the Crocker Mill will be spread over all Pennsylvania, and we can clear out," Brant finished. "All right, get goin'."

Slowly Slevski shook his head. "Not me," he said.

"What do you mean?" Brant rasped. "You agreed to do one more job."

"Not to blow up the whole furnace building and every one in it."

"I don't get my split and you don't, either, till the mill is wrecked," Brant reminded him.

Slevski shrugged imperturbably. "Up to now we take all the risk—you get most of the dough. *You* finish the dirty work!"

"Walking out on me, huh?" Brant's face was livid with fury. "You yellow-livered ape!" He stormed out of the shack, back across the mill yards. Stealthily he moved through the dark to the foot of the scrap heap. A watchman's lantern flashed, and Brant slunk back into shadow.

The acetylene tank was heavy, and Brant staggered, panting, his eyes watchful, to the dark side of the loading platform. Cowering in the shadows he waited while a watchman rang up his time. Then swiftly, grunting with the weight, he hoisted the tank into one of the charging boxes, partly covering it with scrap.

Breathing hard, Brant grinned as he watched the line of buggies bobbing slowly along toward the furnaces. Now to get away from here!

He looked around. The hospital shack was brightly lighted, and he grinned still more broadly. That shack was very close to the furnace building! He started walking toward the gate.

In the hospital, Tony and Doctor Miller looked up from their examination of Danny's crushed body, and stared each other in the eyes.

"We'd better get his father here," Miller said heavily. "I don't want the responsibility of amputating without a——"

"Amputate?" Tony said sharply, a look of horror in his eyes. "Oh, no! Not that!"

"What else?" Miller asked helplessly. "The boy's legs are crushed, the tendons torn! There's nothing else we can do."

"But he won't die," Tony protested. "We won't let him! An intravenal injection of glucose to bring down his temperature—and those tendons can be carefully loosened—replaced where necessary——"

Miller shook his head impatiently. "An operation that only two or three of the greatest surgeons in the country could perform. Bergner, or Rand, or Halliday——"

Tony's face tightened. It had to come out sometime. This was as good as any.

"*I'm* Halliday!" he said crisply. "Let's get on with it!"

OUT in the yards, Brant walked carefully toward the gate. The lights in the hospital shack threw grotesque shadows out into the dark. Suddenly Brant caught his breath. In the waiting room—the shadow of a woman! Gerta! She shouldn't die along with the rest of them!

He dashed toward the shack and burst open the door.

"Hurry, Gerta!" he gasped. "Get out of here!"

"What's the matter?" Gerta turned an astonished, tear-stained face to him.

"Get out, I'm telling you, quick!"

"Do you know who's inside?" she asked him, bewildered.

"They won't be there long," he said roughly, and turned to go.

"It's Danny!" Gerta cried. "He's terribly hurt! They're operating!"

"Danny——" Brant dashed for the operating room door. "What happened to my kid?" he choked.

Tony, working feverishly, did not look up.

"We've got to get him out of here!" Brant insisted. "There's going to be an explosion!"

Tony worked on, lips tight.

"I tell you, you'll all be killed if you stay!"

Miller left the table. "Are you out of your mind, Brant?" he said sternly. "Your boy can't be moved! He has only a bare chance as it is!"

Brant's white, frantic face grew still. Sweat stood on his forehead. "A chance, huh?" he muttered thickly. Suddenly he turned and dashed through the open door, out of the building!

Across the yard he raced, his mind working fast above the tumult of fear and dread. With a leap he mounted the steps to the loading platform, pushing aside an astonished workman.

Like a madman he ran along the narrow platform, peering into the charging boxes that bobbed their way to the roaring furnaces! They must have moved fast! He couldn't find the one with the tank!

Faster he ran, sweat dripping from him. There were only a few, now, before the dump. The last one—— A groan of relief burst from his lips!

He plunged forward, reaching for the acetylene tank, and dragged it out.

The heat of the furnace came up in a blast, singeing his hair, making him gasp. He staggered back, hugging the heavy tank in his arms.

"Look out, there!" a workman screamed. Brant, his face crisped, plunged against the frail wooden railing of the platform. Frantically, he struggled to regain his balance! The tank against his chest lent impetus to his fall. There was a splintering crash. Brant clawed wildly, blindly, at the hot air, and plunged downward beneath the acetylene tank!

The explosion blew away the sides of two furnaces. In no time, the building was an inferno of flame, flying bricks and flowing steel!

The crash had rocked the hospital shack till it creaked. Bricks, plaster, rubble crashed through the skylight and the light under which Tony was working came splintering to the floor.

"Get an extension, Miller!" Tony snapped, disregarding the bits of plaster showering down. "Hurry up with it!"

Frantically Miller worked. "Hold this," he ordered Gerta, and she held the light, while he wheeled the operating table out from under the skylight and the two went tensely on with their work.

Outside the sirens screamed, and flames shone luridly through the skylight. Grimly Tony worked on, and when he had finished, Danny's legs would some day run again. And Danny's father was dead in the shambles he had created!

BY the time Danny was well enough to sit up, the furnaces were rebuilt, the long series of accidents almost forgotten, and Joe Kosovic once more secure in his position of tried and true steel man.

But in the Kosovic cottage, Gerta looked out fearfully at the long, shiny car with the New York license plate that had stood in the street for an hour. And Danny, sharp-eyed, asked curiously:

"Are you *crying?*"

"Of course not!" Gerta told him hastily. "I've just been peeling onions for your dinner."

Danny looked at her suspiciously as she fussed about the room.

"Why is Doctor Davis going away?" he asked.

Gerta drew a deep breath in an effort to keep her voice steady.

"He's going because his name isn't Doctor Davis. It's Doctor Halliday."

"What'd that man come to see him about?" Danny insisted.

"I don't know," Gerta murmured, and Danny looked thoughtful.

"You kin hear through that crack in the door if you listen good," he suggested. Gerta smiled at him a little tremulously. That was exactly what she would have liked to do—and what she was most afraid of.

In the next room, beyond the crack in the door, Doctor Wagner, overcoated and persuasive, said smilingly:

"I saw Carol just before I left, Tony. I think she—well, she seems to feel differently now than when she sent you away."

Tony smiled noncommittally. "Does she?"

Wagner laughed. "So does all New York, as a matter of fact. The newspapers have made quite a fuss about this operation in the midst of ruins. You're going to find yourself something of a celebrity when you get back."

"I don't think I'll be going back," Tony told him quietly, and Wagner stared.

"Surely, you're joking!" he protested. "You can't bury yourself in a place like this! Think of your work—your plans—the children's clinic——"

"Believe it or not," Tony told him good-humoredly, "they've got children in *this* town, too!"

There was utter dismay in Wagner's face. "But you've got too much to give the world, Tony! Your future's all before you, man!"

Tony grinned, and his old friend was surprised at the light-hearted happiness of it. "My future's right here in the next room, Bob," he said. "If you'll wait just a minute, I'll put the matter up to her."

Wagner stared after him in astonishment as he went through the door into the bedroom. For a few moments he paced up and down, frowning, wondering at Tony's decision. Then, curious, he stepped to the open door, and his eyes grew as wide as those of Danny, who watched in open-mouthed amazement.

What Doctor Wagner could see of Tony's future had very pretty hair and nicely flushed cheeks, but he decided he would have to wait to see the color of her eyes, for they were closed. Tony was saluting the future in proper fashion—with a kiss!

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NEXT MONTH **Movie Action** NEXT MONTH

MAGAZINE

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 69

TOO TOUGH TO KILL

A Columbia picture, with Victor Jory, Sally O'Neill, Ward Bond, Robert Gleckler, and George McKay.

(See the February MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE for the full novelized version of this picture.)

Jory is a hard-driving civil engineer, assigned to complete eighteen miles of tunnel which has been "jinxed" by a series of accidents. Before he has been on the job long, he realizes that the accidents are all deliberately planned by mysterious evil forces who want to prevent the tunnel's completion. Cave-in after cave-in takes a large toll of life, and finally the conspirators attempt to trap Jory inside the tunnel with several score of laborers, so that none will ever see light of day again. Then the fun starts!

AN AUTHENTIC, EXCITING PICTURE OF THE PERILS OF ENGINEERING.

DANGEROUS WATERS

A Universal picture with Jack Holt, Robert Armstrong, Charles Murray, Diana Gibson, and Willard Robertson.

(See the February MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE for the full fictionized story of this picture.)

Jack Holt is coming back with bigger and better pictures. Here he is as a sea captain, fighting against crooked ship owners who are more interested in collecting insurance money on their vessels than they are in the safety of their crew. It is a picture of a two-fisted sea-dog who doesn't know how to quit.

HURRICANE, FIRE, AND MUTINY—IT'S ALL THE SAME TO THIS MAN WHO KNOWS ONLY THAT HE MUST BRING HIS SHIP IN SAFELY!

KLONDIKE ANNIE

A Paramount picture, with Mae West, Victor McLaglen, Phillip Reed, and Harold Huber.

Besides starring Mae West and Victor McLaglen, this picture offers more—a story of the Klondike in the days when it was a roaring camp of gold-thirsty men. It's a great background for two great players who make the most of their opportunities.

VIOLENCE AND COMEDY, WELL BLENDED, WITH THE HE-MAN TOUCH DOMINATING.

Continued on page 123

THE OREGON TRAIL

A story of the frontier forces of 1835—of death and vengeance—of frozen wastes and sun-baked valleys.

THE three horsemen stood out against the stark white of the wilderness of snow and ice like grim, silent ghosts. They moved slowly, stiffly, with the horses' heads down in the wind and the bodies of the riders bent forward as they battled the elements.

The leader—Captain John Delmont—wore the uniform of the U. S. Cavalry in 1835. He was young, still in his early twenties, with a lean, weather-bronzed face and stabbing blue eyes that had lost their laughter and love of life. The two men with him were Red and Tim, sergeants in his command.

Suddenly John reined his horse to a stop. His face grew a little more haggard and his eyes widened, as if he had suddenly seen a ghastly terror. In the great valley of white below him was an American flag, rising out of the snow, a tattered and frozen cloth fluttering weakly. Around it, he made out the rotting and torn tops of tents half covered by the drifted snow.

"We've found him!" John cried hoarsely.

His companions said nothing. They followed his look silently. John gave his horse the rein and it moved slowly through the snow to the valley where the tattered flag flew above the half-buried tents.

IT took some time for the men to dig the snow away from the largest one, but when they did, John pushed the flap back. He stiffened, the lines in his face contracting into deep scars. A mist came to his eyes. He shook his head to get control of himself.

Inside the tent lay the bodies of two men. One was middle-aged, wearing the uniform of a colonel. The other was younger, obviously the orderly to the colonel.

John dropped his eyes as he walked into the tent. The older man lying there was Colonel Delmont, his father. The gaunt bodies and the sunken cheeks showed only too clearly that the brave men had died of starvation and cold.

Three months before, Colonel Delmont had been detailed by the commanding officer at Fort Laramie to lead a detachment of cavalry in search of a new trail to Oregon—one that would not take the terrific toll of death from the settlers as did the mountain trail.

The order had been given after a mer-

Directed by
Scott Pembroke

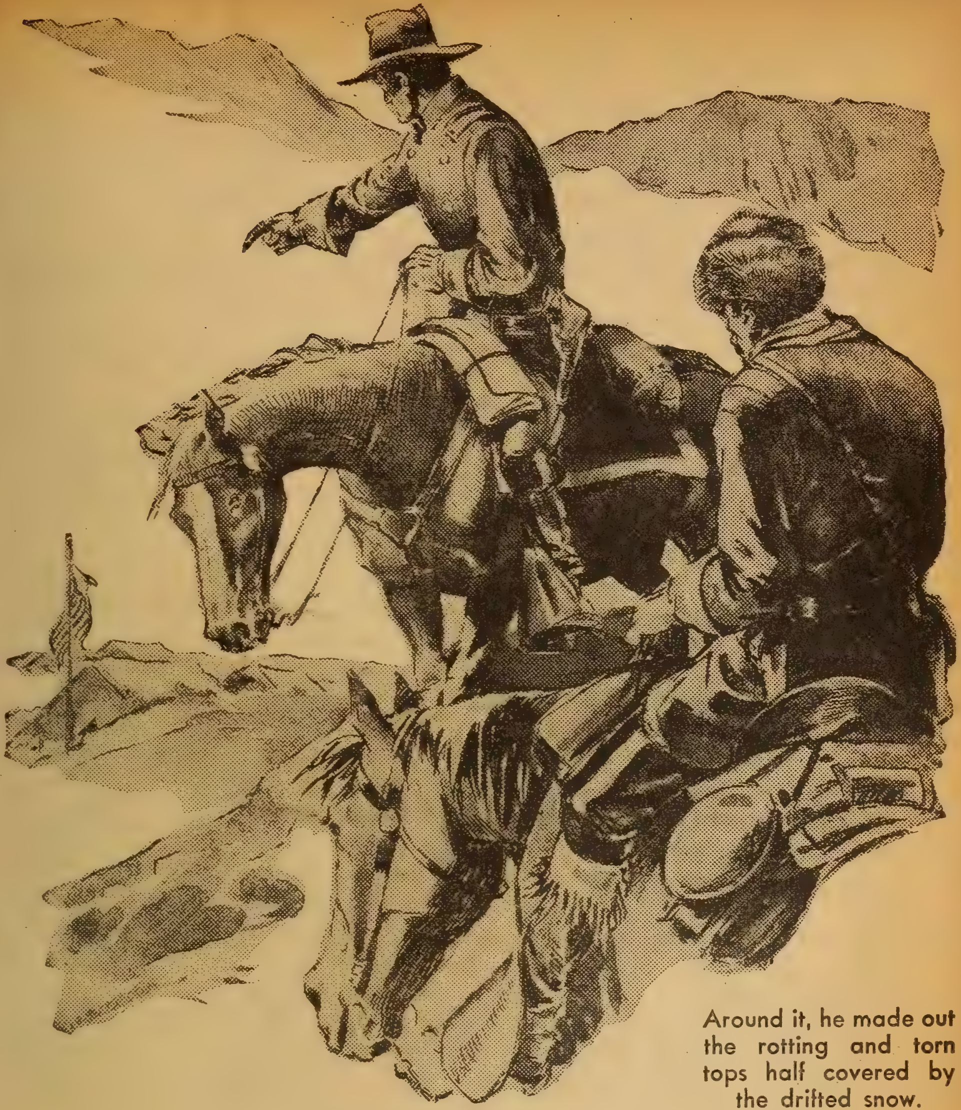
Story and screenplay by
Lindsley Parsons,
Robert Emmett and
Jack Natteford

A PAUL MALVERN
Production

THE CAST

JOHN WAYNE....Capt. John Delmont
ANN RUTHERFORD.....Anne Ridgely
E. H. Calvert..................Ridgely
Ben Hendricks..................Harris
Frank Rice.....................Red

A fictionization of the Republic picture of the same title.



Around it, he made out the rotting and torn tops half covered by the drifted snow.

chant adventurer by the name of Harris, had come to Fort Laramie with George Benton, a scout. Harris had said that Benton knew a trail from Oregon through to California, which was then part of Mexico. If the General would send a detachment with plenty of arms and ammunition and a field cannon, Benton had promised to establish a new and safe route.

The General accepted the idea because the situation with the settlers was desperate. Wagon train after wagon train had tried to cross through the mountains, and disaster had overtaken them all.

The detachment under Colonel Delmont left and that was the last heard of him or his men. Three months latter, Captain Delmont had pleaded with the General for the chance to go search for his father. And he had found him—dead.

JOHN sat down on a log and took his father's diary from his pocket. Even before he read it, he suspected what had happened. He had not trusted the suave and overfriendly Harris, or the crafty Benton. He had not believed their story about the new route.

"Here's the whole story," he said to his companions, Tim and "Red," after reading the diary.

"First, Dad's detachment was attacked by renegades and lost their winter rations. Then Harris disappeared. After that, the detachment pressed on this far. By then, they were hopelessly lost and Dad sent Benton back for help."

"We've come direct from the fort," Tim said, "and we haven't struck Benton's sign anywhere."

"He never meant to go back," John answered. "He never even started. Harris went off with the trail jumpers who raided them for their ammunition and supplies. He left Benton just to cover up his tracks."

"But I can't figure Harris or Benton," Tim protested. "What good did it do them to kill the men who trusted them?"

"California is anybody's country now," John said. "With the arms and ammunition of the detachment, Harris and Benton can raid California from one end to the other! And while they're disguised as soldiers, the U. S. will get the blame! And with that one cannon, they can take and hold the only fort there against any number of Mexican troops!"

"All right," Red conceded grimly. "What's the next move? There's only three of us—and they've got an army of renegades that could wipe us out in a minute! It's winter, and men don't live long in these mountains when the snow buries everything. So we can't stay here, we can't lick a whole army, and we can't go back and report failure. What happens now?"

The bitter cold wind cut through the canvas in shrill moans. Outside, a blizzard was coming out of the west.

John thought quietly for a moment. Then he rose to his feet, his determined jaw showing that he had made his decision.

"We'll cut over to Union Pass tomorrow," he said grimly. "And sooner or later, we'll pick up Benton's tracks!"

THREE days later, fighting their way down the side of a mountain in the teeth of a raging storm, they came upon a wagon train encampment—the Ridgely outfit which John had met several months before near Fort Laramie.

"Cap'n Delmont!" Ridgely cried on seeing John. "Where in thunderation 'd you come from? Ain't you got no better sense 'n to be ridin' around in weather like this? Where you headin' for?"

"Have you seen or heard of a man named Benton?" John asked, ignoring the frontiersman's sincere pleasure in the chance meeting. "I want him!"

"Benton? Why him and two other men joined up with us a hundred miles back. They only left us day afore yesterday!"

"Did they say anything about my father or his troop?"

Ridgely's smile faded. "They was mighty close-mouthed," he said. "Didn't even say where they was goin' when they left, but they headed south."

John nodded. He gathered up his reins to ride off as Ridgely's shout through the angry wind stopped him.

"Hey! What about Union Pass? We've got to get rollin'. Our food supplies are gettin' mighty low. We can't stand to be held up much more."

"Snow is wagon deep in Union Pass," John replied. "But there ought to be a south pass into California. Benton and Harris spoke about it three months ago at the fort. That's why——"

"Benton never said anything to me about a south pass," Ridgely cut in.

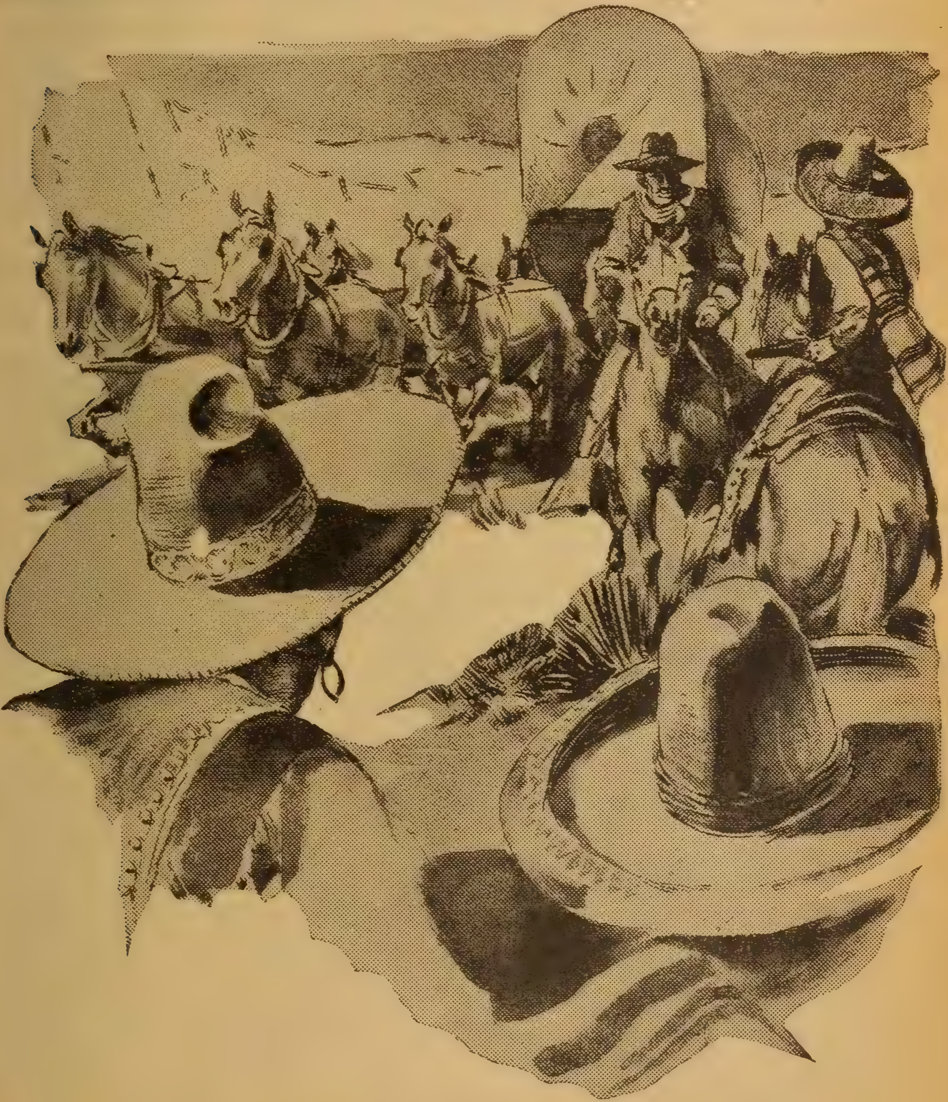
"Naturally, he didn't," John replied. "That pass is a secret with him and Harris. But that pass is your only hope, and if you want to get out of this country alive, you'd better try to find it! I'm looking for that south pass, myself, because I have a feeling it'll lead to Benton and Harris. And a wagon train will draw them out!" he added suddenly.

"Draw them out?"

"Listen, Ridgely," John continued, "you'll all die of hunger and cold if you stay here. It'd take you months to work through Union Pass. If you let me take your wagon train through the south pass, you have some hope—not much, but some. Meantime, I can use your train as bait for Benton and Harris and their gang of trail jumpers!"

Ridgely nodded and looked at his men, who had crowded around him.

"What do you say, boys?" he said to them. "I low that Cap'n Delmont 'll get us out if anybody can, even if it means fightin'!"



"Turn back or we kill you!" the leader ordered.

"I'd rather take chances going somewhere than dying here," one man said.

Some murmured, others shouted, their approval. And finally, Ridgely ordered: "Break camp, and get ready to roll!"

A HALF hour later the wagon train started to move. Ridgely was in the lead wagon, driving the mules. Beside him sat his two daughters, Anne and Sis. Sis was around ten years old. Anne was twenty, with a grace and charm that were rare on the frontier.

John rode alongside the wagon, his eyes on Anne. He had spent a week with the wagon train two months before and in that week, his eyes had never left Anne or hers his. They had talked of marriage, but their paths led in different ways. Anne was going to Oregon to build a home for her father and young sister. John's wife was at the Fort.

That barrier separated them then, but John knew now even a greater barrier was between them. His father had been murdered, and until the murderer had been brought to justice, he could think of nothing else! Anne knew this also, and she accepted it silently.

But as John rode along with the wagon train, he knew that the chances of the train escaping from the winter trap was small. He could only head south toward California, instead of looping east through Indian country.

He realized all too well that, if they were successful in finding a south pass and reaching California, the renegade bands of Benton and Harris might still bring death to them. Yet he knew that more certain death awaited Ridgely and his train if he did not start moving, as their supply of food and ammunition would not last them much longer.

A WEEK later, Benton and a henchman, Tom Marky, were breaking camp fifty miles to the south from where John had met the wagon train. A third man was with them—a mountain renegade white who was busy loading the pack mules.

Suddenly Marky pointed to the north, where a pillar of smoke towered to the sky.

"Look there!" he cried.

"That's no Indian signal," Benton said, his thin face tightening.

"You reckon that might be the cavalry on our trail?" Marky asked.

"We'd better not reckon, but find out!" Benton retorted.

The three men leaped on their horses and rode toward that pillar of smoke. A short distance off, they reached a deep, raw cut in the earth's surface, made by a swirling ice-clogged river which had cut away its banks until they were now steep, forbidding cliffs. Crossing was impossible, but it was also unnecessary. For on the other side, just mounting their horses to ride away from their dying campfire, were three uniformed men!

"That's young Delmont—the colonel's son!" Benton cried. He and his henchmen hurried to cover before the soldiers could see them.

"He must o' found out what happened to the colonel or he wouldn't be trying to cut our trail," Marky said.

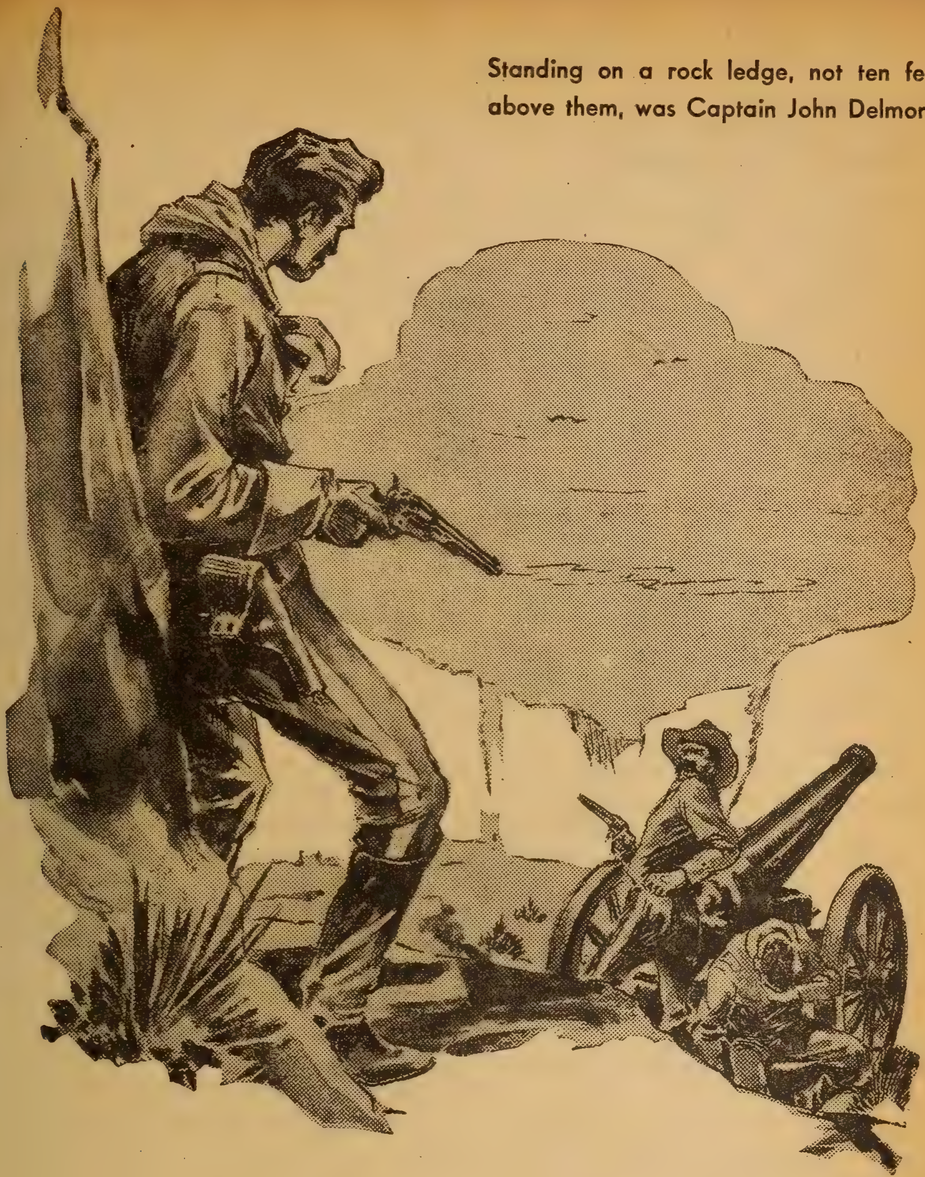
"It doesn't matter what he found out," Benton shot back, "as long as he never gets back to report it!"

His rifle flew to his shoulder. Marky crawled to the left where he could get a better shot and raised his gun. The third man aimed from behind a rock.

John and his two friends were riding along the rim of the opposite cliff, with no possible cover near. The rifle in Marky's hand cracked. Benton's followed, and then the third man fired.

Tim's horse went down, dead instantly, his carcass pitching helplessly toward the edge of the cliff. Horse and rider went over this cliff and were lost to sight, hidden by a bend in the river's banks.

John and Red's horses reared and plunged forward almost to the edge of the cliff. Bullets zipped in front of



Standing on a rock ledge, not ten feet above them, was Captain John Delmont!

John's face. Another seared his leg. His eyes darted for cover—but there was none. He and Red were in the open—perfect targets for the killers!

Red alone was answering the shots. John suddenly spurred his horse forward at full speed. A second barrage of bullets came from the rocks. John's horse hit Red's, and in the next second the two men went flying from the horses and into the river from the same spot where Tim had vanished.

Instantly, the three men darted from behind the rocks, running with their rifles in their hands. At the river edge they stopped.

There, in the swift current below, floated three hats of the type worn by

U. S. Army officers! The assassins watched gleefully as cakes of ice crushed them into unrecognizable masses.

"We don't need to worry about *them* reporting back!" Marky laughed.

"Them hats tell a mighty interesting story," Benton smiled wickedly. "Now let's be getting back. It's time we joined up with Harris."

But they failed to see their "victims," who were safe, though half frozen, clinging to a sheltered ledge at the stream's edge. John said: "That was Benton!"

"And us without a grain of dry powder or a gun to shoot it with!" Red growled.

Cautiously they looked around. Then, deciding it was safe, they pulled themselves from their frigid hiding place.

"You head back to the wagon train," John ordered. "Get Ridgely and the party and meet me here. I'm going to pick up their trail while it's hot!"

A week later, Benton, Marky, and their henchman rode up a trail that led into a narrow canyon. Two lookouts were posted behind boulders. Benton signaled them, and two enormous gates swung across the path and closed behind Benton and his companions.

The massive gates locked the party in a box canyon. Scattered before their eyes were several small hut buildings. Men dressed in the uniforms of the United States cavalry lounged around. A man in a colonel's attire came out to meet Benton.

"You did a fine job, Harris," Benton said to him. "When those gates are closed, the Mexicans couldn't get in here with an army."

"An army?" Harris answered. "Why we've got the only army—the only fort—the only cannon in California! I told you if we could pull the trick on Colonel Delmont, California would make us rich!"

"When do we start?" Benton asked abruptly.

"Soon, now," Harris replied. "I suppose nobody from Delmont's detachment got back to the fort to report what happened?"

"Not a man," Benton assured him. "Young Delmont came looking for his father but we stopped him and his men. They're dead in a river a hundred miles back. What's our next move?"

"We'll split up into raiding parties and chase the Californians out of the country!"

DRESSED in their stolen uniforms of the U. S. Cavalry, the renegades began moving out of their stronghold in small bodies, murdering and plundering.

Haciendas were burned, women and children murdered, in that reign of terror! Families fled in fear, leaving all their worldly possessions behind.

The few Mexican soldiers in California tried to stem the tide of murders, but they were cut down by Harris and Benton's men.

And into this reign of terror, the Ridgely wagon train rode, led now by John. They had found the pass! They had left the mountains! They were entering the foothills of California!

"We're most likely getting close to Benton and Harris," John warned Ridgely. "Keep your men ready for action."

A warning shot cut short Ridgely's answer. There was trouble somewhere ahead! The wagons stopped, grim men leaped to the ground. Terror-stricken women and children hid inside the wagons.

A company of Mexican Lancers thundered over the hill and drew rein suddenly in front of the wagon train, lances and rifles ready for action.

"Hold fire!" John roared to the pioneers. He advanced to meet the Mexican leader.

"Turn back or we kill you!" the leader ordered.

"Why do you say that?" John answered. "We come in peace."

"Peace!" the leader spat out with contempt. "There is no peace from *Americanos.* Your government sends soldiers to rob and kill us!"

John shook his head and answered: "My government has sent no soldiers to California. Those men are murderers in American soldiers' uniforms. We will help you fight them. If you take me to your chief, I will offer to lead my men against these bandits."

The attitude of the leader changed and he nodded agreement. John and his two sergeants, accompanied by Ridgely, rode forward with the Lancers to the nearest settlement.

IN the shadows of huge rocks, maneuvering for their sudden raid on the unsuspecting settlement, were Benton and Marky, with a large number of their uniformed men. They saw a company of lancers come over the hill. Benton cried: "Californians! Let's get 'em!"

Shots rang out from behind the rocks. The company of lancers stopped. Three men fell from their horses and the others had a hard time controlling their frightened mounts.

Lying behind a boulder, Benton stared at the company in amazement.

"Ain't that young Delmont?" he cried.

Marky gulped. "He don't look like a ghost to me! And if he's brought the cavalry through the pass, we're in a trap! Let's get out of here!"

Benton yelled a wild order to his men as he ran. They caught the order, gave one parting shot and disappeared with Benton and Marky.

Benton and his men tore into their hideout fifteen minutes later.

"I just saw young Delmont!" he cried to Harris. "He's still alive! We jumped some Californians and he was with 'em."

"Did you see any U. S. troops?" Harris demanded, his face paling.

"No, but the cavalry may be with him," Benton answered. "He might've brought 'em through the pass and camped 'em back a way. I sent Marky to the settlement to find out."

AT the settlement, Marky eavesdropped on John's talk with Don Miguel, the leader of the Californians. He heard John offer the help of every man in the wagon train to attack the stronghold of Harris and Benton. As a gesture, John ordered Red to go back and bring the men from the train. But Marky, having heard enough, left the settlement before Red.

"Delmont's goin' to attack us with the Californians," he explained later to Harris and Benton, back at the gang's stronghold.

"He sent a messenger to get the men from the train—but his man never got there! I stopped him with a bullet through the head!"

Harris nodded. "Good work. Now, let's get Delmont! We'll send José back to the settlement. He's half Mexican—he'll pass for a Californian. He'll tell Delmont that his man has been hurt and wants him. Then he can bring Delmont here—and we'll take care of him!"

"Delmont's too smart to be caught that way," Benton protested.

"We'll try it, anyway," Harris retorted, stubbornly.

JOSE found John at the settlement, patiently waiting with Tim and Ridgely for Red to bring the men from the train.

"Your man—your messenger," José said, "he get hurt. Gringo soldiers shoot him—he want you. You come with me, alone. I take you to him."

John looked at José, with the trace of a smile on his lips.

"Just a minute," he answered, "and I'll be with you."

He took Tim and Ridgely to one side and said: "This is probably a trap, but its our only chance to get inside their hide-out. Get the men from the wagon train and be ready to attack. I can't explain everything now—but if I can live long enough, we'll have a chance to spike that cannon and capture their hide-out!"

Over a narrow side trail, flanked on both sides by rocky cliffs, John and José rode slowly, single file. Benton, Harris, and Marky, hiding near the gates of their fort, saw the two men.

"Here he comes!" Benton cried. "The fool fell for the trap!"

"Delmont's in front," Harris said. "Pick him off, Marky, when he comes in range."

John and José came up the trail slowly. Harris and Benton could see the uniform of a U. S. captain on the man leading. Then, suddenly, a rifle cracked, the roar of the explosion echoing through the ravines.

Benton and Harris saw the uniformed body stiffen and topple, blood flowing from his head. He hit the ground in a lifeless heap, quivered a little and then lay still.

"Go down and get him," Harris ordered his men.

But as Marky started down the cliff, he stopped suddenly and gave a cry of warning. Far down the pass, led by Tim and Don Miguel, came the Californians!

HARRIS shouted excited orders as he and his men dashed through the gates of the fort and closed them.

"Bar these gates!" Harris cried. "Get the cannon loaded! We'll take care of these fools!"

The camp came to life with running men and wild shouts. Marky brought the light field-cannon out of the cave and ran it onto a platform, high enough to be shot over the gates.

Tim and Don Miguel, followed by the Californians came in range, but the cannon was not fired. Marky waited until the attacking party was almost to the gates; then he applied the flaming torch to it.

There was a terrific roar. A cloud of smoke hid the view. But, when that cloud cleared away, horses and men lay in a mangled heap in front of the gate! The Californians were in wild disorder, stampeding on foot for the cover of the rocks.

Harris slapped Benton on the back. "I told you one man could hold an army with that gun!" he cried.

He laughed harshly as, in the distance, he saw Tim and Don Miguel reform some of their men for a second attack. They charged furiously at the gates, but a second shot from the cannon sent most of them to the ground, wounded and dead.

MEANWHILE, the clamor of the battle was echoing and re-echoing for miles around. Among those who heard and understood, was a party of hard and fearless men, mounted on speedy horses. They were the men from the wagon train!

Led by a determined-looking man with a bandaged head, they doubled their speed in the direction of the firing. Ridgely, riding in the direction of the train, met Red and the men.

He looked at Red like a man looks at a ghost.

"Red!" he cried. "I thought you were dead!"

"Got creased with a bullet!" Red answered. "Managed to get to the train, anyhow. We ain't got time to talk now. The fight's started!"

From the gun platform, Harris and Benton saw this new attack come sweeping up the pass.

"Can you stop them?" Harris asked.

"Wait until they get in front of the gates," Benton replied. "We've got an extra charge in this cannon that'll blow them all to hell!"

The charging Americans thundered down the pass. Benton and Marky loaded the cannon with an extra charge of grape and cast iron slugs and then waited for the riders to come to their death!

BUT as they loaded the cannon, a form moved along the rocky cliff high above them! A human fly, pulling itself from one dangerous ledge to another by a long rope!

Hand over hand, this form came until it was over the box canyon. Then slowly it came down the side of the canyon until it was directly over the cannon.

Marky held the flaming torch ready. Red and Ridgely and their men were riding into range. One shot from the extra loaded cannon would wipe them from the earth, but into the jaws of death Red and Ridgely and their gallant men rode!

But as Marky raised the torch and started it for the priming powder box, the man on the cliff above him yanked a gun from his belt. There was one sharp crack of a revolver. Marky stiffened, dropped the torch and sank to the gun platform, blood spurting from his mouth and his eyes staring blankly in death.

Benton and Harris swerved with lightning speed. Their mouths gaped open at what they saw.

Standing on a rock ledge, not ten feet above them, was Captain John Delmont!

Harris came to life in a flash. His gun came up and roared. John's left shoulder jerked back as the bullet caught him there. But in the next second, he hurled himself down from the cliff onto Harris' shoulders!

THE two men fell from the gun platform to the ground in a snarling, fighting heap. John's left shoulder and side were numbed from the wound. He felt sick and dizzy, but his right came up in a hard upper cut that caught the dazed Harris flush on the chin.

It sent his head back with a snap. John was on his feet, pulling the half-conscious outlaw up with him. Benton leaped to the ground and rushed for John. Other men were coming from all directions. John hurled Harris's body at Benton.

The hurtling body crashed into Benton, sending him down. John leaped for the platform. Men were closing in on him from all sides. Vaguely, he knew the fight was hopeless. He stumbled as a bullet cut across his shoulder.

In a moment it would all be over. His eyes went to the cannon. The torch lay near Marky's body. John lunged for it, picked it up as five men hurled themselves at him.

He went down under the force of the attack, but he twisted and slipped out from under the renegades' bodies. His right hand clutched the gun platform. He pulled his body up. Bullets cut the wood around him. More men were firing at him as they ran toward the platform, but their bullets went wild.

Now John was on the platform! His right hand pulled the muzzle of the cannon down. He jammed the torch on the priming powder. There was a roar that shook the earth!

A new bullet caught John in the left shoulder, sending him down! He saw the twisted faces of Harris's men over him! He heard Benton yell an order to kill him! A gun came up in front of his face! He closed his eyes.

There was a roar—wild and distorted. And John remembered no more.

HE came to with the feeling of being carried through the air. He opened his eyes but saw nothing. Suddenly he was no longer moving. He was lying on something hard. He opened his eyes. He saw the faces of Red and Tim over him.

"It worked!" Tim cried, oblivious of his pal's wounds. "That shot from the cannon tore the gates away and gave us a chance to get in here just in time to save you! We've got Harris and Benton and some of their men that are still living."

John sat up. He looked at Tim and Red. Both were wounded, Tim had his arm in a sling and his face was pale.

"I stopped a piece of grape from the cannon," Tim explained, "but it only tore the flesh away. But how did you get in here?"

John smiled weakly.

"When Harris and Benton fixed their little trap for me," he explained. "I decided to fool them. I pulled a gun on the man they sent for me and made him change clothes with me, and then ride ahead of me, so it looked like I was riding in front.

"They fired at their own man, thinking it was me. He's lying dead out there, I suppose. I had hoped to get inside their fort before trouble started. As it was, I had to climb along the cliffs while they weren't expecting anything from that direction.

"I saw your men coming, and I figured that if I could get to that cannon, I could blow the gates open. Somehow, I managed to do it. I guess you came charging in after I did. I don't remember what happened after that."

A WEEK later John lay on a bed in one of the wagons of the Ridgely train. The wagons were moving south through California, completing the blazing of the trail that was later to be known as the Oregon Trail.

Anne sat over him, looking down at him with soft eyes.

"Your duty's done, John," she said. "Your father's murderers will be brought to justice by the Californians."

"A grim and fast justice it will be," John said. "Let's forget about it all, Anne. We can go back to Oregon——"

"To a new home——"

"And to a lifetime of happiness," John added.

BORIS KARLOFF

is coming again

in

"THE WALKING DEAD"

READ THE WHOLE SHOCKING

STORY IN THE APRIL

Movie Action Magazine

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 111

ROAD GANG

A Warner Brothers picture, with Donald Woods, Carlyle Moore, Jr., Kay Linaker, Henry O'Neill, and Addison Richards.

(See February MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE for the full fictionized story of this picture.)

It could happen to anyone—even to you. That's what makes this tale of two boys, railroaded to an unbelievably brutal and inhuman prison farm, so engrossing. Thrown helplessly from one horror to worse, the boys are finally driven to leading a jail-break in order to establish their innocence and wreck the system which promotes such barbarous treatment of prisoners. Not since "I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang" has such a powerful prison story been put on the screen.

YOU'LL THRILL AND SHUDDER AT THIS SHOCKER.

THE MUSIC GOES ROUND AND ROUND

A Columbia picture, with Harry Richman, Rochelle Hudson, Walter Connolly, Douglass Dumbrille, and Lionel Stander.

Here's the great Harry Richman, singer of songs, in the first picture that has ever done him justice. A favorite of the ladies, and a man who can sing a man's song, Harry Richman romps through this picture as though he enjoyed every minute he spent in making it. He sings his head off in a vigorous, likable manner, and he's a capable actor, to boot. The up-and-coming Rochelle Hudson adds plenty to the picture's charm, and the supporting cast rounds it out.

EVEN WITHOUT THE MUSIC, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A GOOD PICTURE. WITH IT, IT'S SWELL.

TARZAN ESCAPES

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, with Johnny Weissmuller, Maureen O'Sullivan, John Buckler, and Benita Hume.

Here's another great Tarzan picture, with Johnny Weissmuller playing the part of the ape-man as he did in the predecessors. In the heart of the jungle, a party searching for Tarzan's mate, Jane, meet a famous animal trainer and, ultimately, Tarzan and Jane. But getting back to civilization and safety is not so simple a matter. There are hostile natives, fierce animals, natural terrors to be overcome. In his customarily daring manner, Tarzan handles the situation.

THRILLS GALORE IN THIS SEQUEL TO YOUR FAVORITE TARZAN PICTURES.

Continued on page 127

The JUNIOR ADVENTURER'S CORNER

COLUMBIA'S JUNIOR ADVENTURERS CLUB

Old Adventurer Says: "Meet Cap'n Prengel!"

HOWDY, Adventurer!

I've got a letter here, from a fellow Junior Adventurer—Wilbert Kirk, from away up in Fort William, Ontario, Canada. (Funny, isn't it? how these Junior Adventurers get around!) Bill joined with a couple of other fellows from Fort William at the same time. It's a mite early, yet, for reports of activity from up there, but Old Adventurer is expecting great things.

Anyway, to get back to this letter of Bill's, he's got a lot of things to say about the way he'd like to run this club and this corner. One of the things was, he'd like to hear about some top-notch sea captain —a good old sea dog, with a salty taste to every word that falls out of his mouth.

Now, there's a limit to some things. Old Adventurer has to admit that, if it hadn't been for Bill Kirk, leading Junior Adventurer in Fort William, Ontario, Canada, this column would never have been done. There's something about the sea air that just doesn't mix with the dust of the desert or the wail of a timber wolf. This old brain has its limits, and they don't reach far enough to include naval affairs of their own accord.

But, thanks to Bill Kirk, we got the urge to see who there was in a sea-faring way who might have a good story for us. Then all of a sudden we remembered hearing, a year or so back, that lots of people were seeing sea serpents here and there.

"It'd be a great thing," we decided, "if we could get one of those people to tell us about it." So we checked up on who had seen sea serpents, and who was likely to be in easy reach, and—lo and behold! Captain Walter N. Prengel, Master of the Grace liner, *Santa Elena,* was in port!

It took a little time to break our trail to the bridge of the *Santa Elena.* There's an amazing lot of difference between a ranch-house and ship-board. But finally we made it, and instead of some sour-faced old salt, we found as handsome a he-man as you ever laid eyes on!

He wore a natty looking uniform—blue, with a lot of gold buttons and braid and stuff. And, on top of his bronzed face, a smart white cap sat, pulled down to one side. When he smiled, his teeth shone white through the brown of his face, and it was something like someone had smashed open a cocoanut.

He smiled when he stretched out his hand to us, and said:

"Sit down. I'm Prengel. The office just called and said to expect you."

"You don't look like a drinking man, Cap'n," we said.

"I'm not," the young ship's master said. "What made you think I was?"

"Sea serpents. There was a boss cow-hand back in Cochise County that used to see sea serpents, but he'd always have to be pretty well lickered-up, first."

"I should think so," Captain Prengel laughed. "Sea serpents only live in water, and I don't think any sober man ever saw enough water in Cochise County to float anything more than a middle-sized frog."

Then his face got serious again.

"But, about this sea serpent—I actually saw it!"

"I WAS taking the *Santa Lucia* through the Straits of Juan de Fuca on October 21st, 1933. We were northward bound for Victoria, B. C., and I was in my cabin making out some reports. There was a knock on my door.

"'First Mate asks if you can come onto the bridge, sir.' It was one of the crew. So I hopped out onto the bridge. I knew it was something out of the ordinary, and anything out of the ordinary on shipboard calls for the captain to look alive.

"I reached the bridge, and the mate turned to me, puzzled. 'Something off the port bow,' he said. 'I can't make it out, exactly, but I thought you'd like to see it.'

"And, about three hundred feet off, a curious thing floated low in the water. Something like an overturned barge, and yet it wasn't. I focused my binoculars on it, and just as I did, the creature stirred!

"Out of the water rose a head like nothing you've ever seen or dreamed in your life!

"About a yard wide—about four and a half feet long—eel gray—it was a head like you'd see on a sea-cow—and still like some unearthly, prehistoric monster!

"This weird looking head turned in our direction for a moment, as if our ship was just as startling a sight to its eyes as it was to ours. It looked at us for a moment, and then dropped suddenly back into the water.

"Instantly, the sea was alive! The monster's head was attached to an incredibly long, thin body—at least ninety feet long, and no more than a foot and a half thick at any point! With tremendous power, the serpent lashed its long, trailing form into furious action!

"Every inch of its thirty-yard, whiplike body seemed to be supplied with muscles like steel springs. They whipped the water into a seething foam as it shot off into the distance at express-train speed!

Captain Walter Prengel of the Grace liner, Santa Elena.

"On the bridge, we had watched the sight with an intensity which we still regret. We were so interested in the creature—whatever it might have been—that it didn't occur to us, until it was fading away in the distance, that we should have taken pictures of it!

"If we had only had the presence of mind to get our cameras instead of just standing there gaping, we could have brought pictures for all the scientists in the world to see. But we were too stunned—too slow to act—and the thing got away.

"WE met up with a whale shark once, just as unexpectedly," the captain went on. "Forty-five feet long and as thick through as a man is tall! We ran into him in the Gulf of Darien—cut right through him before we saw him, as a matter of fact! We thought about bringing him into port, but we weren't interested in saving scientific specimens at the time. And, anyway, Science ought to know by now what a whale shark looks like."

We wondered, while we were listening to the Captain tell his story, what had brought him to the sea in the first place. This appeared as good a place as any to ask about it, so we stuck in our question.

"How is it you're following the sea, Cap'n?"

Captain Prengel smiled again—a white flash in a leather-browned face.

"I went to sea," he said, "because my Mother argued me into it. When I was a kid—only eighteen years old—I was pretty girl-struck. There was a pretty little girl that I liked a lot, living near us. Mother saw what was happening, and she knew that if she didn't do something in a hurry, she'd have a daughter-in-law on her hands as soon as I could sneak away.

"So she took me aside one day, and she sold me on the idea of becoming a sailor. See the world, visit strange ports, and all that. And, before I hardly realized what was going on, she had put me on a train for New York and I was going to be a sailor!

"The thing that really clinched matters was that Mother neglected—probably on purpose—to give me my return fare! I *had* to make good!

"Well, I got a berth on the old *S. S. Venezuela*, a Pacific Mail ship from New York to the Orient. I signed on as a cadet—I was then a youngster, knowing less than nothing about the sea, but I was willing to learn. And on the first trip out, I was so sick that I wanted to jump ship at Honolulu.

"As a matter of fact, I tried to, and I cabled home for money, but Mother wouldn't send me any. She answered with a very sharp cable, something to the effect that no one in our family had ever been a quitter before, and she didn't see why I should be the first.

"And by the time we finished the voyage, I was a sailor in spite of myself! I've never been able to thank my Mother enough for refusing to let me quit the sea. There's something about it that a man can love. It may be a hard, hard mistress at times—it may make life pretty tough for you every once in a while—but, believe me, once it's in your blood you can't get it out, and you'll never be satisfied with any other life!"

"WELL, then Captain," we said, "there's just one last question we'd like to ask. It'll sort of provide a human-nature twist for the end of your story for the Junior Adventurers if you'll answer it the way we think you will."

"What's the question?"

"You practically said that you went to sea because you were stuck on a pretty little girl. So she must've been a real, important factor in your life. What was her name?"

Captain Prengel stared for a moment, surprised. Then his face got all red under the tan. Finally, when he could talk again, he grinned and said:

"This will show you where my real affections are, now. I can't remember!"

And that was just the way we thought he'd answer! It's the same, whether a man's in love with the tall redwoods or the pounding sea—there's nothing in life that's any more important!

Thanks, Captain Prengel! As one Honorary Adventurer to another, we'll say that you're more than fit to be one of us, and to stand side by side with Jack Dempsey and Casey Jones and Ted Husing and all the others. Glad to have you with us!

THAT just about winds up our Junior Adventurer's Corner for this month. There's one thing we want to say, though, and that is that we're very glad that so many of you are taking the trouble to write to Old Adventurer and ask questions or make suggestions or just to say "Hello." Thanks a lot for all those letters. Keep them coming in!

Old Adventurer

THE MOVIE ROUND-UP

Continued from page 123

MAN HUNT

A Warner Brothers picture, with William Gargan, Marguerite Churchill, Ricardo Cortez, and Charles "Chic" Sale.

Bill Gargan is a reporter on a small-town, mid-West newspaper. Without warning, he is hurled into a frantic hunt for a notorious, jail-breaking Public Enemy. The gangster hides in a deserted cabin, known only to Gargan's sweetheart who is full of sympathy for "persecuted" highwaymen. She has been reading of the careers of such famous bandits as the James Brothers, but she soon discovers that her trust in this modern killer, well played by Ricardo Cortez, is sadly misplaced. Charles "Chic" Sale plays an important and amusing part.

SUSPENSE AND ACTION, CLEVERLY COMBINED WITH COMEDY, RAISE THIS WELL ABOVE THE AVERAGE.

COLLEGIATE

A Paramount picture, with Jack Oakie, Joe Penner, Ned Sparks, Lynne Overman, and Frances Langford.

A nutty musical about how Jack Oakie and his pals inherit a girls' school. They decide that the girls haven't been taught the right things, and they take command in a wild effort to steer them in the proper directions. Instead of History, Latin, and Mathematics, they teach them dancing, singing, make-up, charm, and all the things that they believe are really necessary to a young lady who wants to get herself a smart young husband. It's a barrel of fun for everyone, especially for the girls.

ONE OF THE SEASON'S BEST, FASTEST, AND FUNNIEST MUSICALS.

THREE LIVE GHOSTS

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, with Richard Arlen, Beryl Mercer, Claude Allister, Charles McNaughton, and Dudley Digges.

Here is a pleasant little romantic mystery-comedy about three men who arrive in London after the War, to discover that two of them are officially dead. It develops a new twist with every minute, and before it is finished Scotland Yard has several additional mysteries to be cleaned up.

GOOD, CLEAN FUN, AND LOTS OF IT!

Continued on page 128

Continued from page 127

AND REMEMBER . . .

These were good when we first reviewed them; they still are.

MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY—A magnificent story, from history, of Britain's 18th Century navy. Gable, Laughton, and Tone are the stars.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM—Cagney and Joe E. Brown make Shakespeare's comedy outstanding entertainment.

A TALE OF TWO CITIES—The bloody days of the French Revolution, plus the heroism of Ronald Colman help to make this a truly great picture.

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA—The Marx Brothers are in again, and crazier than ever!

THE STORY OF LOUIS PASTEUR—Paul Muni's latest, about the thrills of medical warfare—Science *vs.* Disease.

THE INVISIBLE RAY—Karloff and Lugosi together again, with some of the year's best horror thrown in.

THE LONE WOLF RETURNS—A slick crook picture, with Melvyn Douglas as the gem thief they can't catch.

ANNIE OAKLEY—Buffalo Bill lives again! He's a great figure in this story about his pretty little sharp-shooting Annie.

IF YOU COULD ONLY COOK—A great little comedy, from the "It Happened One Night" school.

SEVEN KEYS TO BALDPATE—A rollicking mystery farce, with secret panels, mysterious hands, and all the rest.

AH, WILDERNESS—Life's a tough thing for a seventeen-year-old boy to understand. M-G-M dramatizes the problem well.

TWO FACES—A gangster becomes a Hollywood movie actor.

FRISCO WATERFRONT—This is San Francisco's famous tough dock section, used as the springboard for a heavy melodrama.

WHIPSAW—Myrna Loy and Spencer Tracy make this an entertaining melodrama.

THE LAST OF THE PAGANS—The bitter truth about native life in the South Seas, crammed with thrills.

CAPTAIN BLOOD—Sabatini's famous novel in a movie. You never saw such action as there is in these naval battles in 1689!

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT—The American version, with Peter Lorre and Edward Arnold, is a brutal, gripping story of a criminal's conscience.

KIND LADY—Another smart crook picture, but different and tense.

EAST OF JAVA—Charles Bickford in a strong tale about a group of castaways and some man-eating lions.

FRISCO KID—James Cagney as San Francisco's original bad-man, in a riotous, bloody story.

SO RED THE ROSE—A vivid piece, reënacting scenes from the Civil War and Civil War days.

I DREAM TOO MUCH—The glamorous, glorious Lily Pons sings jazz and grand opera for those who love music.

MARY BURNS, FUGITIVE—A thrilling, powerful story of violent justice, well done all around!

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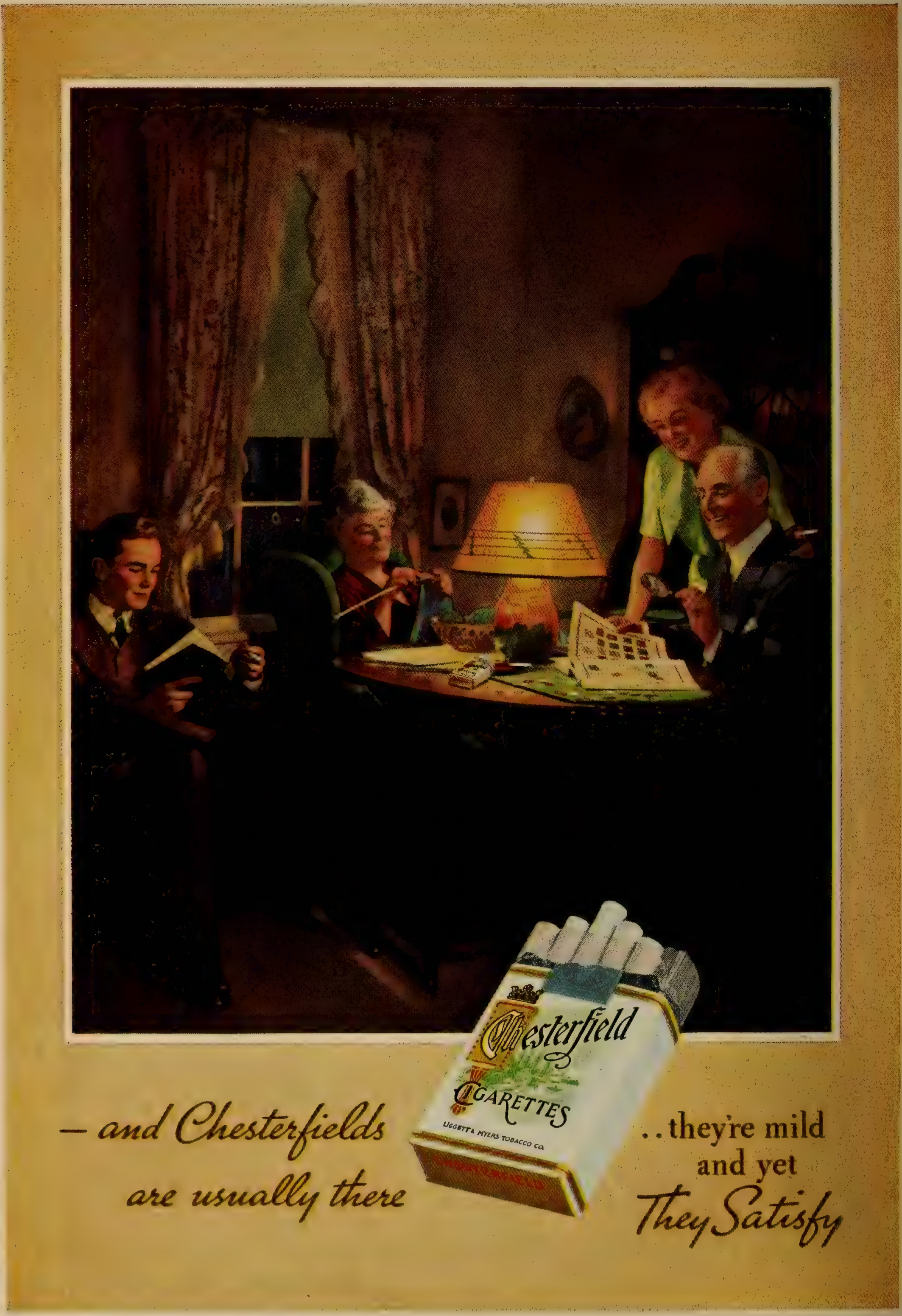
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JUNE
1936

Movie action
MAGAZINE

0c

Back from the Electric Chair Comes

BORIS KARLOFF
in
THE WALKING DEAD
Full Length Story

BUCK JONES
his latest picture
"Silver Spurs"

E 3 STOOGES
actual scenario

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If you are troubled with dandruff or burning, itching scalp, by all means start using Listerine at once. It makes your scalp feel like a million and really goes to work on dandruff as few preparations do. Lambert Pharmacal Company, St. Louis, Mo.

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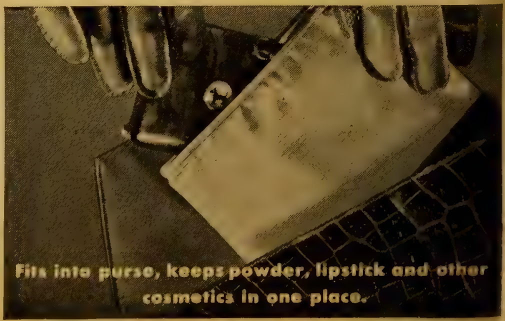

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THE CAST

BORIS KARLOFF	John Ellman
Ricardo Cortez	Nolan
Edmund Gwenn	Dr. Beaumont
Barton MacLane	Loder
Joseph Sawyer	"Trigger"

The Walk

Strong men and killers though they were, they quailed before these all-knowing eyes!

SAM LODER butted his billiard cue against the floor, shifted the stub of his mangled cigar, probed in the pocket of his black waistcoat for matches, and said, nodding to Arthur Merritt's thin face:

"We're going to murder him, Merritt. Murder Judge Shaw!"

Merritt, lined of countenance and shifty of eye, wet his lips and drew in slow breath.

Sam Loder, still nodding gently and grimly, leaned carefully his cue stick against the pool table and held a match's flame to his cigar butt.

There was an instant of silence. Merritt broke it with a whisper.

"Murder?"

Loder suddenly smiled. It transformed his heavy, low-jowled visage from that of an ordinary plug-ugly into the portrait of a type of political boss—ruthless, grasping, without a scruple. He said, smiling: "Murder. It's been done before, y' know."

Merritt gasped: "But—a judge!"

Loder's body silently laughed. "'But a judge,' he says!"

It was a long room, a comfortable room, low-ceilinged, panelled in pine, bordered with deep masculine chairs in red leather. There were no lights over the billiard table, but there were two drop lights burning over the pool table. It was near one end of this that Loder and Merritt were standing, each holding cue sticks.

Balls on the green baize made a shining, challenging pattern. Three other

Screenplay by Peter Milne, Robert Andrews,
Lillie Hayward, and Ewart Adamson.

Directed by Michael Curtis.

A fictionization of the Warner
Brothers picture of the same title.

ing Dead

From the depths of hell comes a living corpse to avenge his death!

men were present—one tall and well-groomed and supercilious, in a dinner coat; one large and overdressed and somewhat pompous, also in a dinner coat; the third younger, slighter, cruder, in a gray lounge suit. The third man was sprawled languidly in one of the leather chairs. He did not seem intrigued by the conversation.

"But—a judge!" Merritt repeated, nodding. "And Judge Shaw! He's a popular hero right now."

Loder scissored thick fingers on his cigar, removed it, eyed it, and said judiciously: "Exactly. And that's just why he's going to be put away. He's a popular hero—*at our expense.*"

Merritt backed off slowly, still harried, and sank into a chair near the young man in the lounge suit. Loder dropped his cigar to the floor, murdered it with his shoe and turned his brown, slightly bulging eyes on the tall man with the supercilious manner.

"We've got it all figured, haven't we, Nolan?" he said slowly.

Nolan nodded. He was as calm and thoughtful as a prelate studying his breviary.

"All figured out," he agreed. "With the assistance of Trigger"—his gray eyes angled toward the lounging fellow in the gray suit—"we can expect an end very soon to His Honor's illustrious career. And," he added, "there should be no comeback on us. Am I right, Trigger?"

The young man said lazily: "Yeah, you're right, Nolan. Somebody gimme a match."

MERRITT turned slowly in his chair, bestowed a frightened and wondering scrutiny on "Trigger." Automatically, he produced a box of matches and gave it to him. Then he stood up.

"But how will there be no comeback?" he asked fearfully. "How can there help being a comeback after Marden's conviction this afternoon? Every one knows that you, Loder, and you, Nolan, and you, Blackstone, and me—we've all had as much to do with that three hundred and fifty thousand dollars that was taken from the city treasury, as Steve Marden did?"

He had spoken himself into hoarseness and a flushed countenance. "How no comeback?" he repeated. "They'll know it was us who had Shaw killed! We even threatened him during the trial, as late as this morning! The public won't stand for an unsolved murder at this stage. And that D. A., Werner, who got the goods on Marden, will be after us like a pack of hounds!"

Blackstone, the pompous one, was nodding a semi-bald head as Merritt finished. "I'm asking the same thing," he said.

Nolan was almost dreamy in his continued calmness.

Loder looked contemptuous. "You've always got the willies, haven't you? You men act like a couple of seminary girls. I'm asking you—we want Shaw murdered, don't we?"

Merritt did not answer.

"We want him put out of the way, don't we?" Loder repeated in a louder voice. "If we don't do it, he's going to bust our organization wide open, isn't he?"

"We're going to murder him,

Merritt swallowed his apple. "Perhaps he is. But how are you——"

"Give us credit for some intelligence, Merritt," cut in Nolan in his best bland jury manner. "We don't want to put our necks in a noose any more than you and Blackstone. And we don't intend to. Shaw will be murdered, by Trigger, in the best approved manner—but it won't be

Merritt . . . murder Judge Shaw!"

Trigger or us who is suspected of the crime!"

Merritt and Blackstone let this item drain slowly through their skulls. Blackstone asked: "A frame, you mean?"

"What else?" asked Nolan lightly.

"But who?" countered Merritt. "You mean you've picked some one out to plant it on?"

Nolan, about to answer, turned slowly, warily, as footfalls sounded without. The door at the end of the billiard room opened inward and a small Japanese, clad in a monkey suit, made noiseless entry. He came halfway to the group, looked on the face of Loder, his master.

"Unnamed individual wishes converse with you," he stated.

Nobody said anything for the space of thirty seconds. Merritt and Blackstone didn't understand. Trigger did, and was on his feet. Loder's eyes locked with Nolan's and he said softly, nodding to the lawyer: "It's him. The fall guy!"

THE drawing-room was brilliantly lighted.

It hurt John Ellman's eyes.

It had been a long time since he had been in a place of bright lights, for the State's prison did not expend needless money on illumination and John Ellman had just finished ten years of gloom.

Ellman blinked until his orbs had become accustomed to the glow, then allowed himself to look about curiously.

Loder's living room was furnished in accordance with the position of the city's most powerful overlord, who had taken a million or two out of crooked contracts.

There were handsome period chairs; a rug on the floor that would have made a comfortable bed; vases here and there; books in cases. In a near corner was a grand piano, and as John Ellman's eyes lighted on it, a sort of glow came into them.

With a glance toward the rear door, he moved in the direction of the piano, his hat in his hands.

He was a big man, broad, rugged, though illy-clad, and his face had the deep dark shadows of a woodcut. It was an arresting visage. Under ordinary conditions, one would have said that here was a strong man, but the eyes had a pleading look now, the mouth was drawn down.

Ellman sat down before the piano and idly, almost silently, began fingering chords.

He did not hear the door to the rear open. Sam Loder and Trigger Smith entered silently, stood eying the back of the visitor calculatingly.

Sam Loder knew exactly what he was going to do. Ellman had been sent to him for help, for he was known as a "right guy" in the underworld. Ellman needed a job.

Well, he was going to get one—but not from Loder, not in this room! Loder would handle him curtly, send him packing—and it would be Trigger Smith, on the sidewalk, whom Ellman would run into quite as though by accident, who would take care of the business.

Trigger, for this evening, was "Mr. Tuthill Smith, private detective," who remembered Ellman's face.

Loder spoke abruptly. "I'm Loder. What do you want?"

Ellman jumped up and swung around, embarrassment and apology on his heavy face.

A LONG black limousine sped down Alamo Boulevard on the south side of the city, swung on two wheels into Park Road and made away swiftly. Behind the wheel was Trigger Smith, and beside Trigger was another man. In the tonneau was a third individual, only he was not, like the front pair, sitting upright.

The car traveled three blocks on Park Road, then banked another corner. Swinging around, it bore down suddenly upon a small coupé in which a young man and a young woman rode slowly. Only the gunman's quick jerk on the wheel saved a complete smash-up.

As it was, the limousine side-swiped the coupé, buckling a fender. The crash of metal died, merged with the whine of Trigger's motor as he righted the car and stepped on the gas.

They shot away, pursued by an angry yell from the young man, who leaned out and shook a fist. Chuckling, Trigger switched off his lights, turned into the Park at the next entrance.

It was a winding drive. Trees blotched the darkness. They whined along for a hundred yards or so, gradually slowing, until Trigger's companion raised a pointing hand, said, "There it is!"

The big car braked quietly. Both men scrambled out, looked back. Nothing was behind them, but a few yards ahead was a light sedan, parked there at the side of the serpentine road, also lightless.

"O. K.," said Trigger, and whipped open the tonneau door on his side. Together, they drew out the third passenger, who even the most casual observer would have seen was a dead man.

"Get the legs," said Trigger, hooking hands under the corpse's shoulders.

His helper complied, remarking, "He didn't bleed much."

They bore the body up to the small sedan. Trigger opened the door next the wheel, and they shoved their cargo inside.

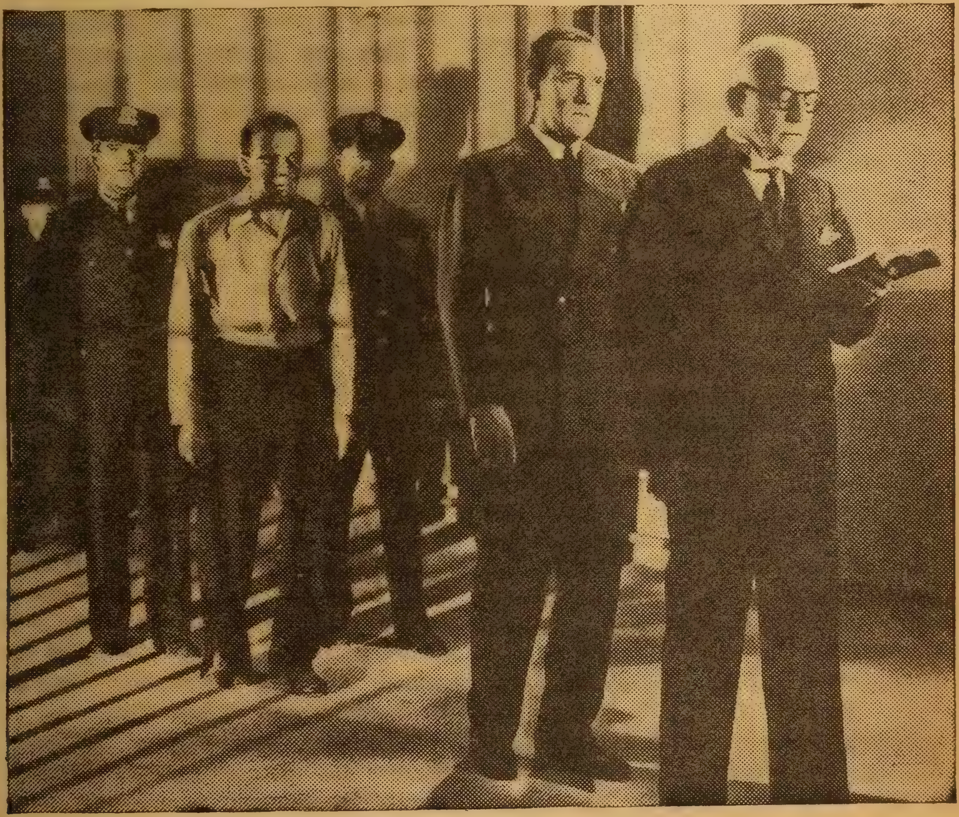
Wiping his hands, looking back, the second man said, "We'd better blow fast. Ellman might knock off and come back any minute!"

Trigger slammed shut the sedan's door. Now he nodded. They jogged back to the limousine, leaped into it and started away just as headlights came to life along the road behind them.

HARDLY were they out of sight before the small coupé they had sideswiped pulled up to a screeching stop. A young man jumped out, staring first at the sedan just ahead, then off into the darkness where the limousine had disappeared.

"Dirty rats!" he exclaimed. "Hit and run! If they hadn't doused their lights I would've——"

"But what's that other car, Jimmy?" asked a girl's voice. A pretty face leaned



The party entered the door at the end—and Ellman saw the chair!

out of the coupé and stared wonderingly at the sedan. "They were doing something around that car. Do you think that——"

"That's what I'm wondering myself," the young fellow said, and strode forward.

He was overtaken by the girl before he reached it, and she clutched his arm. Together they looked over the door, at the empty driver's seat—and then down at the huddled body. Jimmy, with a puzzled ejaculation, pulled open the door.

The body of a man tumbled halfway out and sprawled across the door sill.

"Holy——" whispered Jimmy. "Murdered! And they left him here!"

The girl had clapped a hand to her mouth. "Oh, Jimmy, let's get out of here!"

The young man swung. Somewhere, hidden by the trees, footfalls were coming down the drive.

Jimmy's face hardened in decision. "You said it, Nancy! Come on! We'll see about this later."

He rushed her back to his car and inside, slammed the door and started away. They swung a curve. Headlights blazed full on the tired, drawn heavy face of a big man who was coming down the roadside, a notebook in his hand.

Curiously, the man stared at the couple in the coupé as they rushed past him. Then the car was gone.

John Ellman frowned, stopped, standing in darkness. His eyes probed toward his sedan in a puzzled way.

Into his coat pocket, he shoved the notebook in which he had written the day's last report on shadowing Judge Shaw, whom he had not seen since supper time.

That had been the job which sprang from Trigger's "kindness." Trigger had told him, the night before, that the jurist was suspected by his wife. Posing as a private detective hired by Mrs. Shaw, the gunman had hired Ellman to watch Shaw's house and keep a record of the judge's comings and goings.

Ellman hurried forward to his rented sedan. A moment later, the complete horror of the situation burst upon him. He—an ex-convict, fresh from prison where Shaw had sent him for ten long years—*he* had to be the one to find Judge Shaw's murdered body in his car!

With a frenzied scream in his heart that never reached his lips, John Ellman whirled and fled into the night!

THAT happened on a Saturday. It was Friday, now, just one day short of three weeks later, when John Ellman's trial for the murder of Judge Shaw was drawing to a close.

The prosecutor, George Werner, was capable of excellent oratory on occasion, and he utilized his powers to the fullest as he shook his finger at Ellman.

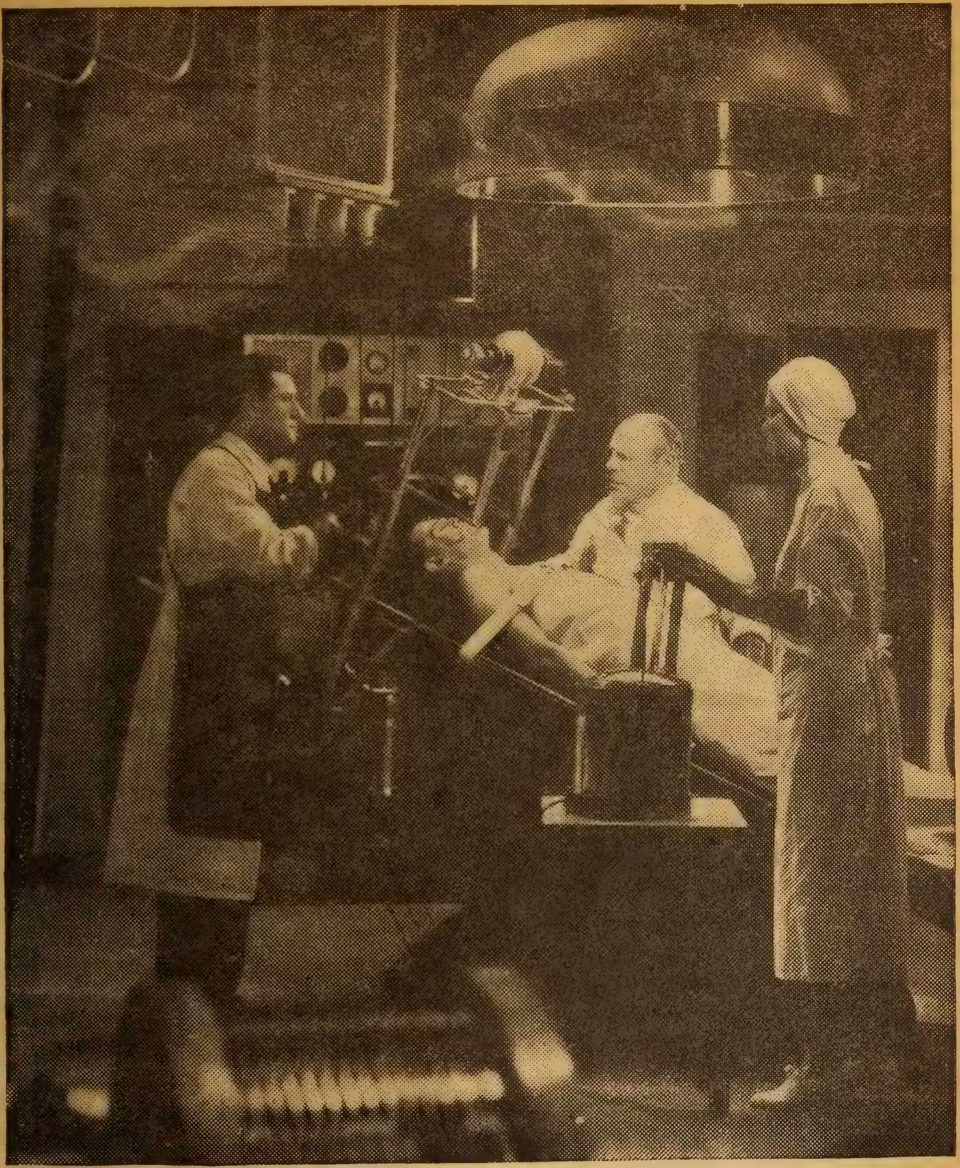
"This man claims that, somewhere, there is a young man and woman who could wave a magic wand and absolve him of all guilt!" Werner's sarcastic voice cut like a knife. "It is so plainly a collaboration of my learned legal opponent and Mister Grimm, of Grimm's Fairy Tales, that I shall not waste your valuable time refuting it!"

Ellman sank lower. The jury eyed him suspiciously.

"Can there be any doubt in your minds? Ten years ago Judge Roger Shaw did his duty as he saw it and sentenced this man to prison. To-day, this man takes vengeance into his own hands, and kills!"

John Ellman filled his lungs. It might have been said that the second-degree murder of a decade ago was the accidental killing of a scoundrel who had ruined Ellman's sweetheart; but the D. A. did not see fit to say so.

"Therefore, gentlemen of the jury," Werner was perorating, "the State demands that you find John Ellman guilty of murder in the first degree!" He



Science brought back the dead from the grave! John Ellman lived!

added quietly: "The State rests," and sat down.

There was a hum in the courtroom, then silence.

The tall, smooth Nolan who had planned the frame-up and was acting as Ellman's lawyer to see that all went well, rose slowly to his feet. Passing Ellman, he patted him encouragingly on the shoulder, and then faced the jury. He was working hard for the small fee he had agreed to accept from the prisoner—but not in the way Ellman imagined!

"Gentlemen," he began, "the greatest fault my client possesses is a belief in his fellow men. He is believing even now that the young couple who have it in their power to free him will step forward. We will admit the sedan, the fingerprints on the wheel, the prison record, the skulking in the vicinity of Judge Shaw's residence. In fact, we deny nothing but the charge!

"We only ask that you try, try very hard, to realize that an unjustly accused man sits in this court, sits waiting—and not in vain, I pray—for those two young people to come forward and say the words."

Nolan paused. He was suave, but pained. He gave the impression of knowing in advance that his client was guilty as charged, and doomed, but hoped to stave it off by begging.

Angling from the jury, he directed his gaze upon his victim's heavy huddled figure. The glow on John Ellman's face showed that Nolan's words, if they had affected no one else, had at least brought gratitude to his unsuspecting heart.

Nolan went on and on. When finally he sat down, a bailiff in the back turned world-weary eyes on a fellow worker and drew his mouth down grimly.

"I thought," he whispered, "that Nolan was supposed to be *defending* this guy!"

The judge rose to make the charge. The jury filed out.

What followed was predictable, even inevitable.

In three hours the jury came back with a verdict of guilty.

Headlines screamed it over the city, as Ellman, dazed and unbelieving, was taken back to his cell.

Loder, Merritt, Blackstone, Nolan—they had a little party that night, with Trigger Smith as an honor guest. They toasted the remains of Judge Roger Shaw, and the fine public zeal of Prosecutor George Werner. They toasted, too, the telephone calls, that had struck fear into the hearts of a certain young man and woman!

IN a white stone house on the north side of the city, a man unknown to most of the citizens pursued his secret and laborious path. Doctor Evan Beaumont was one of the best-known scientists of his day. Not every one realized it, though fellow-workers all over the world had watched for months his experiments in a certain field.

Three months had passed since the conviction of John Ellman of the murder of Judge Roger Shaw, and his sentence to the electric chair—three months in which his appeals had been denied, while the condemned man lived in the death house. Now it was a matter only of hours before he paid for Trigger Smith's murder, completing finally the frame of Sam Loder and his allies!

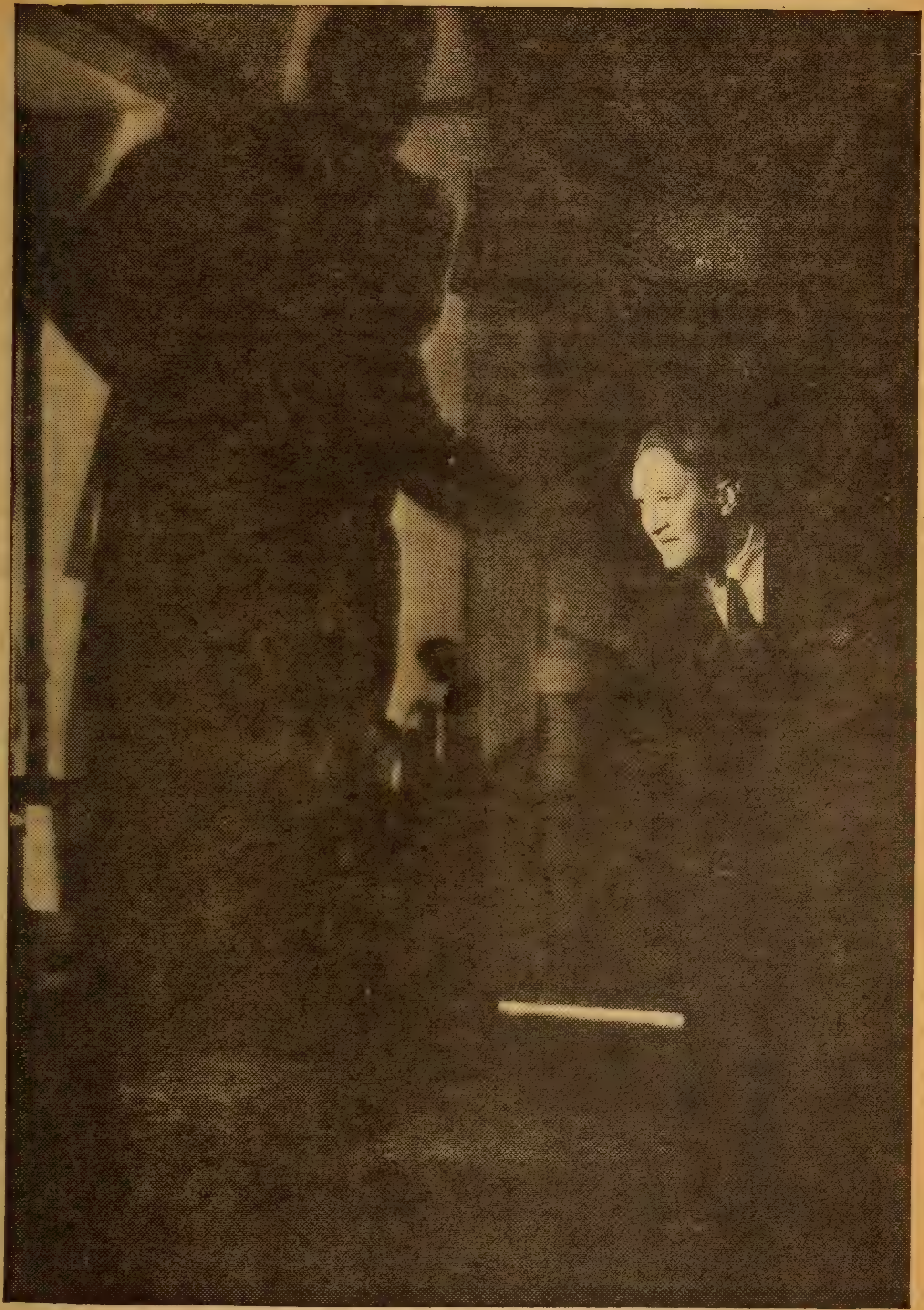
Doctor Beaumont was aware of this in but a vague way—as an item in the newspapers. His mind seldom left the track of his scientific investigations.

Legallois, a Frenchman, had given the motive for those experiments one hundred and twenty-three years before. Their purpose was to find a mechanical "heart" that could substitute for the human organ in all its phases, that could prolong life where the heart was failing—that might even *restore* life after the heart had already ceased!

An idle dream, most people would have said. But those men of science who had kept in touch with Beaumont's work in the past few years were not at all sure that miracles were not in the making in the laboratory behind his white stone house.

A baffling and mysterious chamber was that laboratory, where Doctor Beaumont poised over a microscope this summer night. It was large, circular, and so completely equipped as to be a mere glitter of complexities to the layman's eye.

There were jars and tubes in profusion, racked on shelves, containing various animal organs in an animated state. There were hundreds of scientific



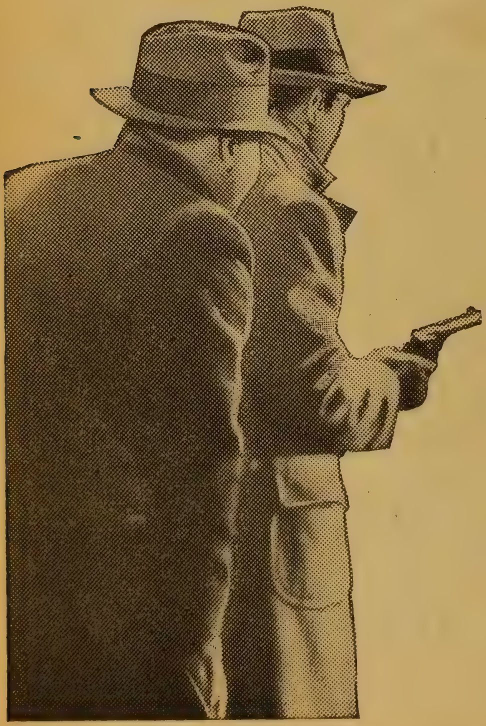
And then Trigger heard—and swung about!

tomes on the smallest phases of his work. There was a large electrical apparatus, impossible to detail, that could only be described as a "resuscitator." And, here and there, were a number of "glass hearts."

The scientist was an oldish man, whose lined and bearded face had the tolerant impassivity born of vast knowledge. He wore a white surgical robe, a mask over his face.

Ending his study of the microscope, he removed the mask, made a few notes on a pad beside him, then walked across the laboratory to where three doors gave on regions beyond. One was to his private quarters; another to the reception office; that in the middle led to the drug room, and before this third door he stopped and gazed gravely through an oval glass inset.

TWO young people—his assistants—were busy at a table, their backs to him. Doctor Beaumont smiled as he heard their conversation.



"Jimmy, how many more payments do we have before this ring is ours?"

"Thirty-six more. Why?"

"Do you suppose we can get married then?"

"I dunno. Doctor Beaumont doesn't like the idea of his staff assistants getting married until they have a reputation."

Beaumont smiled faintly to himself. He reflected that he would have to tell that young man a thing or two. But something else was troubling him vaguely: for three months he had noticed that both Jimmy and Nancy seemed weighted down by some secret, and it was not the problem of getting married. The doctor hoped that, by innocent eavesdropping, he might solve their problem for them.

"Jimmy." It was the girl again, but her voice was altered.

"What?"

She turned to face him. Her oval face, above the surgical robe, was pale, wide-eyed. "I can't go on like this! There are only two hours left before he's executed!"

The young man put his arms about her, spoke through his teeth. "Don't! You can't! *We* can't! I love you, and they won't stop with threats, whoever they are. They'll kill!"

"I can't stand it, Jimmy!" Nancy reiterated. "We've gone on for three months, we didn't speak at the trial, we haven't helped his appeals. And he's innocent! We know it! He's going to be electrocuted up there to-night! John Ellman!"

Jimmy said: "Nancy, it's our lives or his. It's horrible, I know, but——"

Both turned. The door to the laboratory had opened. Doctor Beaumont, his face graver, stared at them in interrogation.

IN an expensively furnished apartment in the fashionable part of the city, Loder, Merritt, Blackstone, and Nolan were relishing a late supper.

It was Nolan's, the lawyer's, apartment—and his the idea of a get-together banquet on this particular night. Such morbid humor was characteristic of the man. He smiled at the faces about him as he ate breast of chicken with his fingers and with the enjoyment of an epicure.

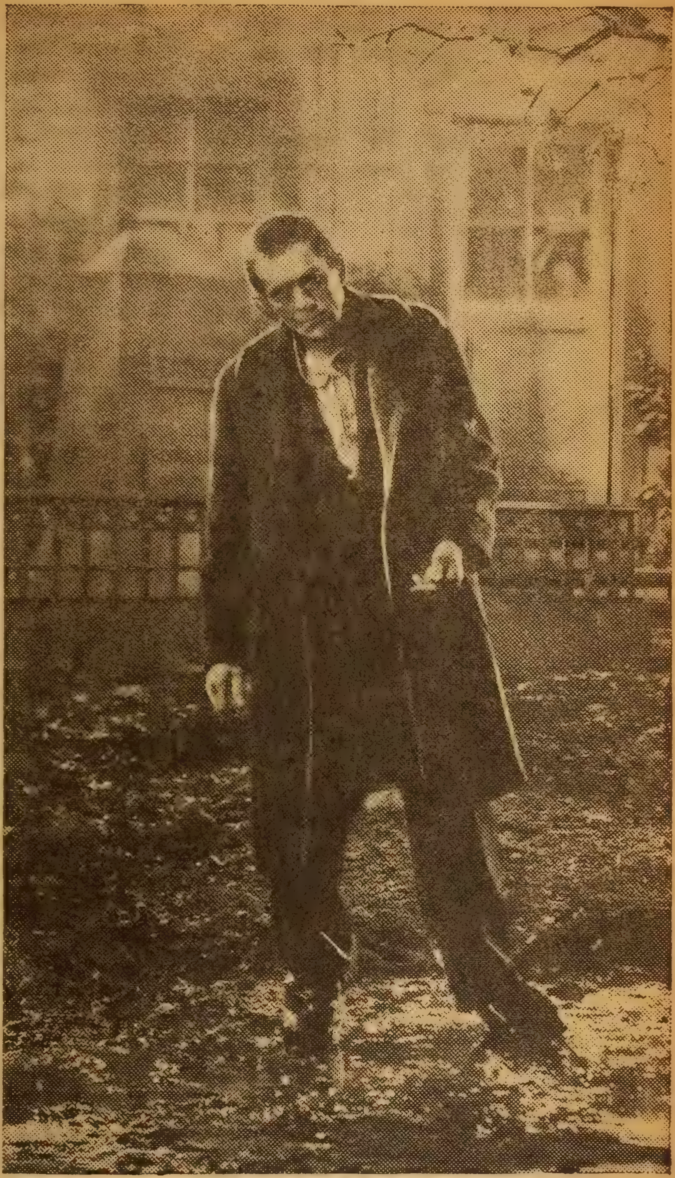
"It's my own recipe, gentlemen. The white wine's the secret. But I'm deeply hurt, Merritt, that you don't seem to be appreciating it. What's the matter?" as Merritt looked nervously at his watch for the dozenth time. "Got a date?"

Merritt breathed thickly. "Lay off!" he snapped. "You know well enough what's the matter. I won't feel safe until Ellman is dead!"

Loder threw him a disgusted look. "Oh, forget it!" he growled. "You've been that way for three months. Can't you draw the line somewhere?"

Nolan smiled as he wiped his fingers. "We can all rest easy. In two hours it will be a closed book. How I labored over those appeals!" he sighed. "I—Ellman's champion. I tell you, gentlemen," he said with fine irony, "I would be at the governor's at this moment, making a last plea, if I thought there was any——"

He broke off. His butler was at hand, bearing a portable telephone. "There's a Doctor Beaumont. Insists on talking to you, sir."



Shots racketed—one, two three! Ellman spun around and collapsed!

"Doctor Beaumont? You're sure he asked for me?" Nolan was curious, but completely untroubled.

"Yes, sir."

"I'll talk to him." He accepted the phone as the servant exited, spoke into it. "Hello. . . . Yes. . . . *What?*"

All color left his face.

"John Ellman!"

The others came halfway to their feet.

"You have them? The two witnesses? . . . Your assistants?" He stared around the faces, narrow-eyed, tense, thinking fast. "Yes, yes, as his attorney, of course I should know first. Very well, doctor."

His eyes made motions for the others to be quiet. Loder was glowering. Merritt was already a wreck. Nolan's voice:

"We have something over an hour before he is scheduled to die. But I can't call the governor direct. I'll have to work through the district attorney. Hold those witnesses there. I'll bring the D. A. over as soon as it's humanly possible. Good-by."

The phone went down. Nolan faced his accomplices. He was grim now, though still ironic.

"Those kids," he said laconically. "They've talked. Beaumont's in on it. I've got to stall."

And as the others continued to gape at him: "Of course," with a smile. "That's the answer. I'll get in touch with Werner too late!"

And he leaned back and picked up his wine glass again.

THE warden, standing before John Ellman's cell, shook his head from side to side. "There's nothing left, John. You must turn your hopes to other things. Have you a last request? It's not long, you know."

John Ellman, heavier of face and more flagged of eye than ever, stared through the bars. "They're going to kill me," he whispered, "for something I didn't do."

The warden waited.

Ellman came out of his trance. "Yes, I have a last request. Music. I used to be a musician. If there's any one here who plays, I'd like to hear my favorite piece as I walk—that way." He gestured.

They left him. He went over and sat down heavily. After a little, a convict came with a cello, and played while Ellman was prepared for the electric chair. It changed a little the big face; softened it.

Clocks all over the country were ticking off his last minutes.

Down in the city where he had been sentenced, Nolan rode beside District Attorney Werner in a limousine bound for Beaumont's, having waited until the last possible minute to start the machinery moving for Ellman's release! And, in Beaumont's laboratory, the scientist and his two young assistants waited feverishly.

But of all this John Ellman knew nothing. He looked back on the fatal night, the fatal moment when he saw that body in his rented car!

"I don't want to die!" he whispered. "I want to live!"

The warden returned, with guards and a priest. The final preparations were made, while the convict played soulfully on his cello, and Ellman listened.

Then the door was opened.

Ellman, resigned to his fate, passed out.

They moved down the passage between the cells, followed by the good-bys of other doomed men. The party entered the door at the end—and Ellman, for the first time, saw the hideous chair.

He fell back as though slashed. A guard took his arm. Slowly, they moved on. And on. And——

IN the anteroom to the warden's office, two guards and a trusty chatted about the prison's baseball team.

"It don't look so good, what with our best pitcher out on parole."

The warden's telephone rang near by. One of the guards rose slowly as he said, "I was reading in the paper where this former big leaguer, Carr Smith, got himself in trouble."

The phone rang again.

"Carr Smith, the shortstop!" exclaimed the trusty. "What kind of trouble?"

The guard reached for the phone. "Assault, with intent to kill."

The trusty said: "He'd *make* our team!" And then hopefully: "Was the other guy *really* hurt?"

The phone rang a third time.

In the death chair John Ellman felt the straps, stared ahead, waited. In his executive mansion, the governor clutched the telephone, waiting. In the city, in Beaumont's office, the scientist, his assistants, Nolan and George Werner waited tensely also.

And in the warden's office the guard with the phone in his hand paused to say: "I dunno. I hope they send him here." He took off the receiver. "Warden's office."

A voice crackled. Respect stiffened the guard's face. "Yes, sir. Yes, governor. What! *Ellman?*"

The last was a shout. But even as he uttered it, the lights in the room dimmed. Ellman had got the first jolt!

CONSTERNATION reigned in three widely separated rooms a moment later—the death chamber, the governor's library, and Beaumont's office. Everywhere, the death of an innocent man was taken as a personal responsibility.

Nancy slumped, sobbing, in a chair. Jimmy walked back and forth, chalk-white. Beaumont stared at the wall, and Werner choked hoarsely: "Already dead. We were too late, by minutes. And he was really innocent all the time. I feel like a murderer, myself!"

Doctor Beaumont, whose mature courage had forced this move on his young assistants, did not reply to the D. A. His fine eyes, circling the laboratory, swept over the jars, the microscopes, the "glass hearts," the electrical resuscitator. His mind was on a body, even now being carried from the death room in the State's prison.

The girl's cries filled the room. She was blaming herself now; and Jimmy, trying to comfort her, could find no words. It had been his fear for her that had caused this; but he still felt himself accused.

Beaumont looked at one and then the other. Something came into his eyes in that instant, perhaps as he thought of their lives, marred permanently by the death of one John Ellman whom either could have saved. Without warning, he leaped up and grabbed Werner's arm.

"Get the governor back! Tell him to call off the autopsy!"

The D. A. stared open-mouthed. "Why?"

"Don't ask questions!" Beaumont shouted. "There's no time to lose! Call him!"

It may have been that Werner thought the scientist mad. Certainly he could not understand the fierce gleam in old Beaumont's eyes, the biting clutch of his fingers. But, whatever he thought, there was that in Beaumont's face which brooked no refusal.

George Werner reached for the telephone.

Jimmy, straightened abruptly from Nancy, stared at his chief. His eyes, not old and wise like the doctor's, reflected the denouément as it crashed through his brain. He took a step forward. "Doctor!" he cried. "The resuscitator? The 'heart'——"

Beaumont nodded slowly, with an expression on his face Jimmy had never seen before.

"Yes," he said. "We shall attempt it!" He looked at Werner, who had the governor on the phone.

THEY got John Ellman's body at a little before five o'clock that morning.

They got it just as it had come from the electric chair, for Werner's call had staved off the prison autopsy by a matter of seconds.

It came in the gray uncanny light that precedes sunrise—came to a laboratory where waited Doctor Evan Beaumont and Jimmy and Nancy, several nurses and an interne, while around them the city slept, unheeding.

It was delivered in a private ambulance, specially chartered. Men who knew nothing of this business but marveled none the less portaged a stretchered figure shrouded with white cloth up stone steps, into the building and down a corridor into the laboratory.

"On that table," directed Beaumont, indicating.

The corpse of John Ellman was laid out on the table in the center of the laboratory.

"Very good. You may go."

The carriers exited, removing their stretcher. Beaumont advanced to the sheeted form, while behind him his staff watched with fascinated eyes.

From off to one side, as Doctor Beaumont removed the sheet that covered the body, Jimmy's voice sounded tautly and hoarsely.

"We're almost ready."

Beaumont tossed aside the sheet, gazed upon the body. No expression—either of hope or of fear—was visible upon the doctor's face. Only the intense, all-absorbing concentration of a pure man of science. He might have been Euclid, gazing for the first time upon a demonstration of his geometry, or Columbus, watching a ship's sail disappear over the horizon, while he hypothesized that the earth was a globe.

"The tubes," Beaumont breathed, and the interne and the nurse hurried to push forward a large and strange machine from which tubes elongated like the arms of an octupus. With his own hands, Beaumont attached them to a mask which he fitted over Ellman's face. He affixed clamps to the dead man's upper and lower arms, and electrodes to his finger-tips, from which wires led to the machine.

He stepped back.

The light directly overhead was blinding. Out of the drug-room door came an instrument table, wheeled with soft squeaks by a following nurse. Jimmy came after, with Nancy behind him. Beaumont gestured, and the young man went to take his place beside an electrical switchboard, after a single look at the body.

"I think we are ready," murmured the scientist, without emotion, though every one knew that his life's work hung upon the next moments.

"Ready," Jimmy echoed. He was managing, by a superhuman effort, to emulate his superior's calm.

Doctor Beaumont gazed a moment longer at the lifeless flesh before him, while his mind fleetingly lost its singleness. He wondered if here, now, he was to break through a veil that had never before been lifted!

"All right, Jimmy!"

Jimmy touched a dial!

THERE was a cardiograph—a delicate instrument to register heart beats—on the wall near the body. Its needle remained stationary as the first flow of mysterious currents attacked the corpse.

There was an indicator set behind glass on the strange machine from which tubes ran to the corpse of John Ellman. Its marker, too, showed nothing.

Doctor Beaumont looked from the dead man to the indicators on the wall, back again, and then repeated the process.

His face, like the needles, gave clew to nothing whatever. To his helpers, he was a stone image, an observer, a creator perhaps—but never a compound of emotions. He watched and acted—but seemingly he felt nothing.

His glance swept to Jimmy, passed a message. The dial was turned farther.—

Still nothing.

Doctor Beaumont allowed the faintest shadow of dismay to track across his face and then vanish. He extended a hand, touched the nearest of the dead fingers before him.

Cold. The others could feel it, even watching him. Beaumont looked at Jimmy, inclined his head—and once again the dial was turned.

Now no one breathed or moved. Beaumont was a statue, hammered out of whiteness.

Distantly, from the world that had been left behind when this thing started, a tower clock chimed softly—five times. It brought a start from the nurses, from Nancy, but no move whatever from Beaumont and the other men.

The chimes died into nothingness and only the laboratory remained, with all eyes on a corpse on a table that rocked slowly back and forth—a teeter-board arrangement.

Beaumont waited, watched.

Jimmy stopped turning the dial.

For a moment it was as though the world stood still; then—something happened!

What it was, no man could have said—a tinge of color, an indefinable thing called "life" that showed itself fleetingly in the passive hand of the patient. But it was enough to stiffen the frame of the heretofore emotionless scientist, to bring a flash to his eyes and a color to his own cheeks!

"Turn it on full!" he cried.

Jimmy turned the instruments to their maximum. The others crowded closer. The needle of the cardiograph began to take life, quivering slowly, but with gathering strength! The indicator of the other machine moved up behind its dial! Gradually the plunger of the "metabolism" equipment began to move with Ellman's breathing!

His eyelids trembled.

A finger stirred.

Beaumont jerked up.

On his aged face was wonder, exaltation. In a vibrant voice, he cried:

"He is *alive!* He will live!"

And the others knew that he spoke truth.

THE news was flashed that morning, two hours later, around the globe.

For the first time in history, science had brought back the dead from the grave!

John Ellman lived!

Feebly, as yet, it was true. Dazedly—and as though something had been lost in that five hours of nothingness after his electrocution. But he lived. He breathed. He sat in a chair in Beaumont's office and gazed upon wondering, awe-struck faces, and tried to answer questions, tried to be a human being again.

Doctor Beaumont looked upon this creature whom he had, in a sense, recreated, and wondered what it could tell him when the shock had passed, when normal life was once more resumed.

As for Sam Loder, and Merritt, and Blackstone, and Nolan—the inconceivable had happened to them, and they were a badly frightened group of men. Their frame, their murder of John Ellman, via the State, had been completed. And then an impossibility had upset it. The work was *not* done.

Doctor Beaumont, two days later, made it known that he proposed to hold a private reception for certain scientists and figures of importance in the city, whereat he would display John Ellman, the man from the grave.

A brief formal note invited Nolan, as Ellman's attorney, to attend. Similar ones went by mail to Merritt and Blackstone and Sam Loder. All were prominent in the city's politics: there was nothing strange in that.

But the thought of going to gaze upon their victim produced another conference among the four, in Loder's living room the night before the reception. Merritt was in a panic. Loder scowled. Blackstone paced nervously up and down.

Only Nolan retained his coolness, saying: "I tell you, there's still nothing to worry about. He's alive and they've cleared him—but what of it? *He* doesn't suspect anything. And Judge Shaw's murder is three months old; they'll have a fine time going back and pinning it on Trigger and us!"

No one answered him at once. But then Merritt was on his feet with a ghostly look on his face, pointing at them.

"He won't suspect, you say? How do we know?" His voice trembled. "There's a rumor out that John Ellman is a changed man since he was electrocuted. They say he acts like he knows things that he didn't know before. It was five hours from the time he was burned until Beaumont brought him back to life. Could he have learned about us, and Trigger, and what we did to him during those five hours? Could he have learned how we framed him, *while he was dead?*"

FORMALLY clad men and women thronged the reception hall of Doctor Beaumont's house the next evening. Conversation buzzed, while behind it all lurked a common tense curiosity, the same air of restless waiting.

There were scientists here from all parts of America, they having flocked into the city as though to a convention in the past few days. There were city officials, local men of prominence and their wives. Nancy and Jimmy were present. And present, too, were Sam Loder and Nolan, and Blackstone and Merritt. They stood apart from the others, talking quietly.

Doctor Beaumont made an appearance at the back of the spacious hall and moved forward, nodding and greeting guests. There was no hiding the quiet satisfaction in his face at this testimony to his miraculous performance.

"I will bring Mister Ellman out in a moment," he said to his guests. "First, I want to say that I think it will relieve him of any embarrassment if, instead of a formal introduction, he just sits down at the piano"—he gestured toward a baby grand in one corner—"and plays something for you. He was a musician, you know, of considerable talent."

Every one nodded excitedly, vaguely, and the doctor turned and went a little way toward the rear door. "All right, Nancy," he said, and the door opened.

John Ellman came forth, led by Nancy.

On the girl's face was a glow that made her lovelier; she seemed to be personally and peculiarly wrapped up in the man whom she led. But no one noticed that, except perhaps Jimmy. All eyes were on John Ellman's large, neatly clad figure—the man from the grave.

He came slowly up the big hall, looking this way and that without self-consciousness but with a faintly puzzled air as though all this business intruded upon some thoughts of his own. That he had changed since his "first life" would have been evident to any one who had seen him before.

There was a haze to his eyes, a faraway look in them. He was older, but he was also, in a sense, more childlike. Following Nancy, he made his way to the piano, where Doctor Beaumont waited.

In their far corner, the four politicians watched and held their breaths, wondering, fearing, wishing they were elsewhere. Merritt's face was pale, twisted. As John Ellman sat down at the piano, some one threw a light switch and the room was left in semi-darkness except for a brilliant light over Ellman, and one or two floor lamps.

One of the latter picked out the sta-ing faces of Merritt and Blackstone and Nolan and Loder.

A HUSH held the room for an instant, and then Ellman began playing. It was "Kamennoi-Ostrow," the same piece that had been plucked from a cello while he walked to the electric chair. Nancy and Beaumont retreated, leaving him alone; he played softly at first, then more loudly.

Watchers near the piano saw a change come gradually to his face. He might have been a psychic medium attempting to establish contact with a presence in the room which he could feel but not yet define.

The music swelled. It became harsh, vicious. Ellman's face lifted. There was some sort of knowledge now in those strange eyes. He gazed off into the audience, questing, his head turning in slight jerks as his fingers tore at the ivory keys.

Then, suddenly, his stare became fixed. He was looking straight at Merritt!

No one could see what passed between the men in the seconds that followed. The music thundered through the great hall, but Ellman's gleaming eyes did not stir from Merritt's face. It was as though he had found something that a secret knowledge had told him was here!

His eyes burned across the darkness at Merritt's face. The craven politician half rose from his chair, then slumped back. That gesture brought what might have been a mocking smile to Ellman's face.

His eyes moved, roved again. This time they fixed themselves on Blackstone. Again, there was the same fierce certainty and mysterious knowledge. Blackstone stared back, tugged at his collar.

Merritt whispered thickly: "He knows us! He's *learned!*"

The smile of John Ellman became settled. He released Blackstone and without a second's hesitation this time, bore down upon Nolan and Loder. They, too, stared back, though with more control than the others had manifested. The other guests, meanwhile, were aware only that something peculiar was happening; what it was they did not know.

The tautness was snapped by a sudden break in the music. With a crashing discord, John Ellman ended his recital. Simultaneously, Merritt and Blackstone stumbled for an exit.

They came together in another room. They were joined there a moment later by Nolan and Loder, both of whom, though worried themselves, were angry at their accomplices for displaying their feelings.

"I'm not going back in there!" Merritt ground out. "I'm getting out of here!"

Blackstone nodded: "Me, too. I'm going to put Trigger to work on that thing in there!"

Nolan and Loder met each other's eyes.

"What do you think, Loder?" Nolan asked coldly.

Loder squirmed under the lawyer's level gaze. Then, suddenly, he blurted out:

"I think he knows, at that!"

TRIGGER SMITH put down the telephone, picked up his highball. It was a half hour later that night, and the killer had just listened to the imperative voice of Blackstone, telling him that John Ellman had to be put out of the way—that somehow he *knew* and was a menace to them all.

Trigger had scoffed at first, then had argued, finally demanding three times his usual "rate." Blackstone had accepted, saying he would come in half an hour.

"Huh?" Trigger muttered scornfully. "Afraid of that guy! Just because they brought him back to life." But a shadow crossed his own face as he reflected that he, of them all, would be easiest for Ellman to suspect!

He turned back to his small, scantily furnished room—such a place as a hired gunman would maintain, from which he could flee on a moment's notice and with a minimum of packing. It was sordid, barren, in the harsh light of an overhead bulb, whose pull-cord hung a few inches below the shade.

Trigger walked to a mirror and eyed his dapper, heavy frame. He straightened his tie. Eyes reflected the conflicting thoughts that chased through his limited brain. He scowled.

Suddenly he turned and went to the center table, opened its drawer and took out an automatic pistol. With it he got cartridges, cleaning rags, and pulled up a chair beside the table. He sat there with his back to the door.

He began cleaning the gun, and as he worked the faint trouble left his cold eyes and he smiled to himself. Had he not been thus self-satisfied he might have heard the doorknob as it turned slowly, inch by inch. He might have heard the door itself as it opened from the dark corridor outside. He might have seen a face——

But Trigger was thinking of how a gun cures all fears, just as it had cured the integrity of Judge Roger Shaw, some months ago. He could not have dreamed that John Ellman, slipping away from Doctor Beaumont's house immediately after the reception, would have been led to this dingy room by something which Ellman, himself, could not have explained!

The door swung wider. John Ellman's full avenging figure stood there, outlined against the blackness of the corridor. Still Trigger suspected nothing. Quietly, Ellman closed the door.

And then Trigger heard—and swung about!

FOR an instant he stared, thunderstruck. Then a taut crooked smile tugged at his lips as he came slowly to his feet. "Well, I'll be——" he said softly. "Here I was about to go call on you, and you come and save me the trouble. Have a seat."

Ellman did not stir. After a pause that pulled at the killer's nerves, his guest said slowly, hollowly, "Why did you kill Judge Shaw?"

Trigger started, snarled: "Easy with that stuff, buddy! I never saw the judge!"

Ellman pushed on stubbornly: "I thought—that night—you were my friend. But you only hired me to trap me. You murdered the judge and put his body in my car!"

Trigger descended slowly to his chair, reached for his gun. He said: "You're nuts, Ellman," as he pulled the cartridge box toward him and began loading the pistol's clip, still without taking his eyes from the other.

John Ellman did not heed the movement. "You took my life!" he said slowly.

Trigger jumped up. The gun, loaded, was in his hand and leveled. "And I'm gonna take it again unless you got cat blood in you! Nobody's going to bring you back this time!"

He aimed pointblank at Ellman. The man from the dead started toward him. Trigger backed off, snapped: "Stay where you are!" He tightened his grip on the gun, but he was strangely powerless to pull the trigger!

John Ellman came on, kept coming, and as he passed beneath the light an upraised hand caught in its switch cord, pulled it with a snap!

Blackness hit the room on the instant! Only Ellman's face stood out, unearthly, as he pressed on toward Trigger. The gunman tried desperately to bring himself to action. Horror and panic swept over his face. His mouth opened.

"No! No!" he choked. "Get back or I'll——"

Then Ellman was upon him, clutching the gun! They struggled for it! Its black metal twisted about—Trigger's hand finally tugged and a bullet crashed out——

John Ellman fell back a pace, stared down at the collapsing body. He turned abruptly and left the room.

NOT many minutes later, a horrified Blackstone was gaping down at the lifeless thing that had been Trigger Smith. Hearing the shot from downstairs, he had rushed up, narrowly missing a face-to-face encounter with John Ellman, lurking in the shadows of the hall.

Blackstone's nerves went to pieces. He fled out and down to the street, leaped into his car and drove madly for his own apartment.

More than the sight of John Ellman's eyes at the reception an hour ago, the sight of Trigger, dead by his own gun, convinced him that they were up against a supernatural thing for which there was no defense!

Trigger! The coldest-blooded rodman in the city—dead by his own hand!

Blackstone packed a bag, grabbed up all he could carry for an extended trip, hurried out and back to his car and made for the railroad station.

Flight from the city was all he could think of. Loder and Nolan and Merritt could look out for themselves; he was going to put space between himself and that creature who had once been John Ellman!

At the station, he found that a train was due in five minutes. He bought a ticket. The platform was deserted as he hurried out, and shortly he heard the whistle of the approaching train.

Relief swept over him and he started down the platform so as to board the smoker at the train's end. Then, just as suddenly, a frozen man, he halted!

Standing there before him, was John Ellman!

His eyes burned on Blackstone's face, accusing and vengeful. He moved forward—seemed to float!

"Get back!" shrieked the terrified Blackstone. "Get back! I'll——"

Wildly, he turned, stumbled, started to run. Without reason he did it, with no thought but to escape those eyes—those eyes burning their message that *they knew!*

He did not hear the blast of the approaching train as it bore down the track. The onrushing glare of the headlight was nothing to him.

He dashed out and upon the tracks, arms outflung, gaze fixed on the fence that divided the tracks, over which he could vault and reach the safety of the opposite platform and——

The screech of air brakes sounded like a siren! Blackstone's sudden scream rose above all else for a terrible moment!

The scream ended abruptly. The train crashed on. John Ellman looked, dropped his head, turned and vanished.

LODER, an hour later, paced the floor of his living room.

Nolan leaned against the mantel and tried to appear self-confident.

"First, Trigger," said Loder, "then Blackstone. Within two hours! You can't tell me that train was an accident!"

Nolan pulled at his underlip. He was not quite as suave and assured as usual. "I can't tell you anything—now," he retorted. "We're up against something. We've got to think fast—handle it."

The door bell jangled. Merritt rushed in. He looked ten years older. "Have you heard?" he cried. "Blackstone——Trigger!"

Loder growled. "Sure, we've heard. Who are those men out on the sidewalk?" He was pointing through the window.

"Mine." Merritt was hoarse. "Bodyguards! I'm taking no chances. I'm going back to my place, now, and I'm staying there until this—this business is stopped!"

Nolan looked at him, and sneered. "Always yellow!"

"What else can I do?" Merritt whined. "Nothing—you can't stop a ghost!"

Loder snarled: "Get out of here. You're no more use than an old woman. Get out!"

Merritt departed. At the window, Loder and Nolan watched him join his guards, dart nervously into a car and speed away.

"Well?" said the political boss. "Where's that wonderful brain of yours?"

"Working." Nolan clipped out the word. "I've got it all figured out, now."

His words automatically drew Loder closer to him while he explained: "Ellman is still indebted to me for his defense. Beaumont may have brought him back to life, but I'm the one who defended him in court! I'll get a court order to-night, directing Beaumont to turn Ellman over to me, as his guardian. I'll say he's not quite right yet, and I'm going to sue the State in his behalf for false execution. Once we get our hands on the man, we can dispose of him!"

Loder thought that over, and nodded. "Now you're talking!" he rapped. "Let's get going!"

MERRITT had reached his apartment in a high-priced section downtown.

"One of you stay here," he directed his guards, indicating the dining room at the left of the entry hall. "The other—get into my bedroom."

He was sallow with an unnamable fear. The hired guards regarded him amazedly, but they took up their posts. Merritt went into his living room, mixed himself a stiff highball and downed it in three gulps.

At the end of the room, French windows faced the street far below. Lights flashed through their curtains. A storm was rising and the rumble of thunder had loudened and become more frequent in the past few minutes.

Presently rain beat against the windows, and the wind blew one partly open. It clattered against the side of the casement with the hollowness of an empty coffin.

Merritt flew across the room, reached out and slammed it shut. His mouth was twitching as he turned away and looked at his watch.

There was nothing to do but go to bed, but he foresaw little sleep to-night unless he drank himself into a stupor. He kept seeing Blackstone—poor, dead Blackstone—rushing out onto the railroad tracks while a train's mass bore down upon him. In his mind's eye, he saw John Ellman standing near by—as he must have been standing—with his eyes driving them all to death and——

Merritt uttered a throaty noise and made for the sideboard. He mixed and drank more whisky and soda. Flushed, he mopped his face with a handkerchief, picked up a magazine, settled down to read.

The print danced before his eyes. Outside the storm grew, blotting out all nearer sounds. Merritt thought he dozed, while something urged him to awake, to go and check his guards who might be dozing, too. He started up suddenly. His eyes strained in his head.

In the doorway to the entrance hall, dripping from the rain, stood—John Ellman!

How long he squatted there like a canary before a snake, Merritt could not have known. Disbelief fought in his numbed brain with a cold, horrible fear. He wanted to think that this was an illusion, born of his fears. But then Ellman started walking toward him!

Merritt fought upward, scrambled from the chair and backed away. His throat ached to scream for his guards, but he could not. From some spot that might have been miles away, he heard his voice say hoarsely:

"What—do you want? What are you going to do to me?"

No answer came from the walking corpse. By a pace and then another, John Ellman shortened the distance between himself and the politician. Merritt clutched his tightening throat, still backing.

"I didn't do anything! They—the others—did it——"

Ellman came on, relentlessly! On his

line-carved face was a look, now, that was grim and savage in its satisfaction.

Mad with fear, Merritt swung about and dashed for the end of the room. The vision of Blackstone at the station must have left him then—he did not see the French window any more than Blackstone had been aware of the train.

With a crash, he struck the one which he had shut—but not locked—a moment before. It yawned outward with him. He pitched through—screamed!

His body, hurtling downward to the sidewalk in the rain, grew smaller and smaller to Ellman's peering eyes.

LODER and Nolan sat in the politician's car across the street from Beaumont's house and watched the white stone building.

The rain still fell, though now but a drizzle. It was after midnight. Nolan had got his court order, and had displayed it to Beaumont only twenty minutes ago.

The scientist agreed that John Ellman would be turned over to him to-morrow. To-night, said Beaumont, was impossible. Ellman had just come in after a foray in the rain. His health was endangered.

"There's his room up there," Nolan pointed.

Loder grunted, looking at the window. Wet with sweat, his pocketed fingers wrapped themselves about a heavy automatic——

Inside, meanwhile, Doctor Beaumont and Nancy and Jimmy tried to learn from the blank-faced, heavy-eyed creature who was John Ellman what he had been up to to-night.

The news of Trigger's death had not yet reached them, but a radio flash had told of Blackstone's end under a train, and not more than twenty minutes before Ellman had returned, another announcement had retailed the death of Merritt, found on the sidewalk before his house.

What lay behind these, and their connection with the unlocked brain of the man from the Beyond, Doctor Beaumont more than suspected. He had watched Ellman closely in the past two days. As he had said to District Attorney Werner earlier that evening:

"I'm convinced that he has knowledge not received from man!"

But what that knowledge was, and how Ellman had received it, the scientist could not discover, for all his careful probing questions. He stood up with a gesture for Nancy to take Ellman to his room.

"Come, John," said the girl. And Ellman, with a gentle smile for her, followed her out of the room and down the hall.

A moment later, Nancy stood outside the closed door and wondered how this would end; whether Doctor Beaumont would succeed in lifting the veil that now seemed to hang between John Ellman's mind and the everyday world. She was about to start back to the laboratory when a noise halted her.

A window was being raised in Ellman's room! The light in there suddenly went out. The girl knew that their patient was leaving by his window—and immediately she resolved to follow him, alone, and learn where he went!

Hurriedly, she donned a coat and slipped out by a rear door. Ellman was striding up the street, head bowed against the drizzle, his shoulders hunched. A heavy sedan that had started up down the block and was tooling in his direction went unnoticed by the girl as she followed.

ACROSS town for five blocks Ellman led her, while the sedan cruised slowly behind, only its parking lights burning. Nolan and Loder watched both figures, muttered together, as Loder handled the wheel——

Nancy, with a start, realized after twenty minutes where Ellman was heading. They had reached the park section of the city where residences were scattered. Just ahead a wrought metal sign beside a roadway said, JACKSON MEMORIAL CEMETERY. Beyond it stretched the darkness of the home of the city's dead, broken only here and there by the white glimmer of a headstone or a monument.

John Ellman turned in at the gate and walked through the darkness of the graveyard path. The girl followed.

Somewhere behind them, a car stopped and two men alighted and pressed forward.

The path wound through trees and past many mounds that looked like miniature hills in the night. Then, ahead, a small building showed, a tool house or something of the sort. Into it vanished Ellman's big figure, and the girl hurried forward.

She stopped in the doorway. A black shape that was Ellman's stood by the shack's window, gazing out into the darkness upon all the sleeping dead.

Nancy spoke. "John!"

He turned swiftly and his face stared at her.

She spoke again. "Why did you come here?"

He recognized her, then, and came a pace forward, his features softening. He said, "It is so peaceful and quiet."

"But you can't stay here! You must come back with me! Please, John!"

The man shook his head, and he did it in such a way that the girl knew he was decided. For the moment she was nonplused. Then the only solution came to her—she must telephone Doctor Beaumont at once. She should not have followed alone, anyway.

With a word for Ellman, she turned and vanished into the cemetery, running down the road. She did not see the two figures who crouched behind a tree not far from the shack. Nor the glint of metal in the hand of one!

"NOW'S the time," Loder whispered.

John Ellman's figure could be seen faintly in the door of the shack. Nolan was fearful. "You're staking everything!" he hissed.

Loder said, "We've got to," and raised the gun.

The man there had not seen them. He was harkening to the distant retreating footsteps of the girl. Loder took careful aim in the darkness. Shots racketed, lancing fire—one, two, three!

Ellman spun around, clutched at the back of his head, and then collapsed.

Loder and Nolan broke from the trees and sprinted off into the darkness.

Nancy heard, turned, and rushed back, horrified. But she did not see the murderers. They regained the car and Loder took the wheel and Nolan panted: "Around the Boulevard way! Back to my rooms! When this gets out——"

"We had to!" Loder kept saying. "He *knew!* Sooner or later he could have told!"

He drove madly. They raced on along the cemetery wall and then around it on the Hillside Boulevard, from one side of which a cliff fell away sharply to the city's ash dumps three hundred feet below.

Hunched behind the wheel, his heavy face set and contorted, Loder pressed his big car as he had never before. The roadway was wet and treacherous; the misting drizzle still made visibility poor, but he ignored those things.

Nonetheless, it was Nolan, ironically, who brought on their doom. They were almost to the end of the Boulevard and its cliff below when the tall criminal lawyer suddenly threw a hand forward, pointing, and shrieked:

"Look out! *It's Ellman!* Right in front of us!"

Whether Sam Loder shared that phantasm was never known. But his response to Nolan's cry was automatic; he tugged fiercely at the wheel.

The car tacked sideways, swerving madly at better than fifty miles an hour. It made for the cliff. Loder's brakes screeched. The heavy machine swung the other way, then started to skid.

For seventy yards it flashed back and forth on the glasslike roadway, while Loder sweated and gaped and tugged at the wheel, while Nolan clutched the door and yelled.

Then front wheels bounded off the road on the cliff side, found the shoulder and pulled the heavy car behind them. It wabbled there, slowing, as Nolan tried to throw open his door and leap.

He was halfway out—and Sam Loder was pinned behind the wheel—as the limousine went over the cliff and somersaulted down—down—down to rocks and refuse far below.

There it exploded, burst into flames.

NEAR the cemetery tool shed, Nancy was waiting in an agony for Doctor Beaumont and Jimmy to come, she having fled away for long enough to phone them.

The man who had been framed by Loder and his crowd, after coming out of prison—who had been executed and then brought back from the dead by Doctor Beaumont—was filmy-eyed now, weak of voice. Blood trickled from the side of his mouth as he tried to smile up at the girl's face.

A car's motor stopped somewhere, and Beaumont and Jimmy came rushing. To the doctor it was evident immediately that this time Ellman was dying, not to be resuscitated. Loder's bullets had struck him in body and head.

"Help me, Jimmy," Beaumont said hoarsely. "Inside!"

They carried him into the shack, laid him on a table there. Beaumont knelt and bent over his "creation," stared into Ellman's eyes.

"You can't save me this time, doctor," Ellman whispered with a faint smile. He added in a strange voice: "I remember now—all those things you asked me. I know. That bullet—in my head——"

Eagerly, the scientist said: "What things, John?"

"Nolan and Loder—— They are dead now, too—and those other men. They framed me, they sent me to the chair."

"But how did you find out?" the doctor asked hoarsely, in a last desperate effort to break through the veil before this man died.

"You didn't know before your execution. How do you know now?"

Ellman choked, then said faintly: "It's—hard—— I don't seem to be able to say it. You mustn't ask, doctor. Leave the dead to their Maker. The Lord our God is a jealous God."

"But—can't—can't you give me an inkling? What is death, John? Can't you put it into words?"

Ellman blinked. His voice came from far away. "After—the—shock—I seemed—to know——"

The words trailed off. His eyes had closed. A shudder clutched the frame, left it still, and Doctor Beaumont raised his head as Nancy, sobbing, threw herself into Jimmy's arms.

"The Lord our God *is* a jealous God!" whispered the scientist reverently.

Slowly, he got to his feet.

For sheer excitement, interest, suspense and thrills, there is only one magazine that stands far above the rest—THE SHADOW MAGAZINE. Twice a month, at only ten cents a copy, you get in each issue an eighty-page novel—really book-length—short stories of fast action, and the unusual features of a code department which gives you codes you yourself can use, crime problems, and crime facts. Go to your newsdealer to-day and get a copy; you'll never want to miss another!

THE LEATHERNECKS HAVE LANDED

"Ex-marine . . . kicked out of the service!" That's the record of Woody Davis, a Shanghai drifter. Still, when duty called——

"WOODY" DAVIS, his feet set wide apart, stared up at the sign,

TRANSPACIFIC MINING COMPANY

SHANGHAI DIVISION.

This was the place, all right. His lips formed a grim smile; his gray eyes narrowed as he entered the building.

He found himself in what looked like a warehouse, piled high with crates and boxes, variously labeled CROFTON CANNED SOUPS, CROFTON CANNED VEGETABLES. And then he saw the bending figure of a man—*the* man—pushing some of the boxes aside!

A sneering smile flitted across Woody's mouth as his quarry whirled, startled by the strange footsteps. It was the same Dresnov—the same thin face, the same shifty eyes, the same ugly scar across that jutting chin.

THE Russian's eyes narrowed at the sight of Woody, recognition flaring in them, too. His thin lips curled as his hand darted under his coat for his gun. But the gesture did not escape Woody's alert eyes.

He leaped forward, the ugly scar on Dresnov's chin a target for his fist. His right uncorked a terrific punch that sent Dresnov reeling. As he stumbled backward, Woody jerked the gun away from him and tossed it into a space between the walls of boxes. Now he was ready to fight!

Dresnov regained his balance but Woody's fist landed on that scar again. The Russian's powerful fists smashed back blow for blow. There was iron in those fists, but there was iron in Woody's heart, too!

This was more than a slugging match to him, more than an ordinary brawl over a dame. This was a fight to avenge a buddy's death! A fight to avenge a disgrace!

Woody launched a sudden furious attack, barging into Dresnov with both

THE CAST

LEW AYRES	Woody Davis
James Burke	Corrigan
Jimmy Ellison	"Mac"
Ward Bond	"Tex"
Victor Wong	Cheng

Story by Wellyn Totman and James Gruen.
Screenplay by Seton I. Miller.
Directed by Howard Bretherton.
Supervised by Ken Goldsmith.

A fictionization of the Republic Picture of the same title.

battering fists, keeping his head clear, knowing where every blow was meant to land and seeing it land there!

He saw nothing but that scar. With the unerring eye of a sharpshooter, he aimed blow after blow at it, unmindful of the crushing body punches Dresnov dealt him. Relentlessly, he drove Dresnov on, battering him, driving him back, back, back!

A swift, twisting right to the chin staggered Dresnov. Another toppled him heavily, his head cracking sharply on a heavy crate!

Woody paused a moment as he watched Dresnov roll on the floor. He breathed heavily, his fists red with blood. When the Russian came to his feet, one more blow would finish him. But suddenly a light flared in the renegade's eyes; he made a dive for the space between the walls of boxes.

The gun!

Woody saw the gleam of metal and dove after him. He felt the cold touch of steel in his hand, and Dresnov's fingers gripping his. With the grim silence of on-rushing death, the two struggled for possession of the weapon.

Then a shot rang out! Dresnov's body went limp under him, the head dropping forward!

Woody rose slowly, letting the lifeless body slide to the concrete floor, his eyes staring at it with a dull gaze, the gun dangling from his fingers.

"DROP that gun!" a voice broke into the silence.

Woody looked up, looked directly into the muzzle of an automatic. He saw a husky, middle-aged American taking

With the grim silence of onrushing death, the two struggled for possession of the weapon.

him in from head to toes with narrowed eyes.

Just then a shrill whistle sounded outside, followed by a babel of excited, high-pitched voices. Woody tossed the gun back toward the Russian, pulling out a handkerchief and wiping his hands. Let the police come! What difference did it make now?

Without a word of explanation, the American raised his gun and fired two spaced shots at the warehouse ceiling. The second bullet shattered the globe and the reflector in the light that hung overhead, plunging the place into pitch-darkness.

"I must be getting old!" the man exclaimed loudly. "Taking two shots at that distance!" He dug his hand into his pocket. "Guess you win!"

Before Woody could open his mouth to find out what this was all about, the door swung open and the sergeant of the Sikh police was in the room. His flashlight picked out the figures of the two men.

"Hello, Mr. Corrigan," the Oriental said respectfully. "What's the trouble here?"

"Just a little bet that I could still hit 'em with one shot. Sorry if I've disturbed any one. This is Mr. Edwards, a friend of mine," he introduced Woody. "Bad enough losing a five-pound note without being arrested for disturbing the peace, eh?"

He handed Woody a bill.

The sergeant glanced about. The muscles in Woody's jaw tightened. The Russian's body was hidden by the boxes. If the sergeant didn't take it into his head to go snooping about the place, all might be well. But——

"Well," the sergeant grunted, "please do any future target practice outside the city, Mr. Corrigan."

"O. K., chief!" Corrigan laughed as the policeman left.

"DEAD?"

Corrigan nodded toward the boxes when they were alone again.

Woody nodded his head.

"What was the fight about?"

Woody's eyes narrowed, that light flaring in them again. "He killed a friend of mine," Woody answered finally.

"What are you doing in Shanghai?" Corrigan asked.

Woody shrugged his shoulders. "I was a marine when I got here," he explained, "but they busted me out of the service. So I thought I'd hire out with the Chinese as a gunner in this revolution of theirs."

Corrigan eyed him carefully. "Which side?"

A bitter smile flitted across Woody's mouth. "Doesn't make much difference."

Corrigan hesitated a moment. Then: "Since you waded in here and left me short-handed, how'd you like to hold Dresnov's job?"

"Doing what?"

"Taking supplies up the river." Corrigan smiled wryly. "To the rebels," he added.

"Guns?" Woody confronted him.

"Machine guns and ammunition."

Things seemed clearer to Woody. "No wonder you covered me just now," he grinned.

"I don't like to have the police messing around these soup crates and supply boxes," Corrigan said calmly. "The job pays big money—two thousand a trip. But the risk is big, too. You're the goat if anything happens. Transpacific has a big, legitimate business shipping supplies to the interior. If any contraband is found, *you* stuck it in with forged labels. If it gets through, Cheng has a funny habit of raiding our warehouses and making off with rice—or anything else he finds."

"I'll take the job," Woody said quietly.

They watched the men take the machine guns out of the coffin.

WOODY was leaning against the rail of a Chinese junk, smoking a cigarette, as he watched the coolies load the boat when Corrigan came to him with the bad news. A military cordon had been thrown around the settlement and every warehouse was being searched with a fine comb for the guns that were to be smuggled to the rebels.

Everything was out of the warehouse on the junk except the sixty machine guns Woody was holding there until the next trip. "We can have them down here at the water front to-night," Woody said calmly, as he tossed his cigarette into the black waters.

"Not a chance!" Corrigan growled. "They're stopping all traffic at every gate, and there are outposts of U. S. marines all along the river!"

"Don't worry," Woody said easily. "I'll have them here by noon to-morrow!"

"I doubt it," Corrigan said, "but if you do get them on board it means a two-hundred-dollar bonus!"

Woody laughed. "You'd better stop by your cash drawer in the morning."

THERE were marines everywhere as Woody strolled up the street near the Soochow gates. They were posted near the bridge stopping all passing vehicles to examine their contents.

He looked at them enviously, remembering when he had been one of them. But then he smiled grimly. This was no time to get sentimental! He glanced at his watch.

"Woody!"

"Why—Mac—hello, Mac!" Woody warmly greeted an old pal of his, all resplendent in a new lieutenant's uniform. "What are you doing here, Mac?"

"Guarding this gate," Mac said, proud as a kid.

"You're——" A grin spread across Woody's face. "You're guarding this bridge?"

"Sure, what's so funny about that?"

"Against what?" Woody asked with feigned amusement. He knew only too well that Mac's duty was to intercept the machine guns which were due to cross this very bridge in a few moments!

"I can't tell you," Mac shook his head.

A tumultuous clamor broke into their conversation. The air filled with weird cries, singsong chanting, the blare of horns.

"Get a look at the funeral!" Mac exclaimed.

The procession came winding up the narrow street, passing directly in front of them. It was a colorful sight. The casket, covered with rich drapes inside a heavily ornamented palanquin, was carried on the shoulders of a number of natives. Behind it, grotesque papier-mâché figures rose in the air, turning, swaying in the hands of the people who carried them as they chanted a mournful song. Bright banners streamed above it all, giving an almost carnival atmosphere to the spectacle.

One of the marines stepped in front of the procession, holding his rifle up. He was greeted with cries of protest from the mourners.

"Hey, Greer!" Mac called out. "Let them go. You can't stop a funeral!"

Greer lowered his rifle, stepping back as the procession went on, the chanting growing louder, the singing more weird.

"They sure give them a royal send-off, don't they?" Woody commented.

"Yeah," Mac said, staring after the funeral, not noticing Woody's faint smile of elation.

"Well, it's twelve o'clock. I've got to beat it," Woody said. "So long. Don't let the enemy get past you."

"I won't!" Mac answered him with assurance.

CORRIGAN paid Woody his bonus as they watched the men take the machine guns out of the coffin and the papier-mâché figures. The guns were then covered with white cloth and slipped into the middle of burlap bags filled with rice, then sewn up so that even a close inspection would reveal nothing but rice in them.

Woody took care of the loading of the junk while Corrigan left for his train. He had to go on ahead, to prepare the carts at the end of the river to carry the stuff to the interior.

The junk finally made its way up the river slowly. Woody stood at the rail, a machine gun ready for emergency. Their course took them past an American cruiser, gleaming in the noonday sun. The reflected glare nearly blinded him so that he had to turn away.

He was glad to turn, glad for an excuse not to see the other boat. A long time had passed, many things had happened since last he trod the decks of that cruiser in the service of Uncle Sam! From the dirty poop of a Chinese junk bearing contraband, there was something almost sacreligious in looking upon his old troop ship. He knew then that he would gladly trade his smuggler's gold for the cool khaki of the service!

IT was a long, hot, dirty trek from the end of the river journey to the settlement. Woody wiped the sweat from his forehead as he walked alongside of the gang boss. It had been a tough jaunt, all right, but they were near their destination.

"Is that the Transpacific?" Woody asked the gang boss as a group of warehouses and oil tanks loomed in sight.

"No. 'Melican Oil Company. Number One boss there Mr. Hewitt. Our

Cheng barked out orders to his men.

place beyond village little bit, toward hills."

The sky was black with the Chinese night as they finally reached the Transpacific warehouses. Corrigan greeted Woody with a welcoming smile from the porch of the office. The ex-marine followed Corrigan into the rough but comfortable quarters.

Sinking into a chair, he gulped the drink Corrigan offered him. "What's the next move?" he asked, setting the drained glass down.

"Cheng makes the moves from now on," Corrigan replied. "We'll keep up a front delivering dynamite and supplies to the mines around here. That's supposed to be our business, you know. Then, when Cheng needs supplies, he'll 'raid' us and take them."

THERE was a sharp rap at the door. Corrigan and Woody looked at each other. Corrigan rose slowly and went to answer. But there was no cause for alarm. Their visitor was the resident manager of the American Oil Company's local station.

"Oh, come in, Hewitt," Corrigan said. "Meet my new assistant, Mr. Davis."

"How're you?" Woody firmly gripped the hand offered to him. He liked the elderly man on sight.

"We're going to need protection here!" Hewitt said excitedly to Corrigan. "I just learned that Cheng came across the border at Ho Tao! I keep runners out along the border and one just came in with a report—Cheng slaughtered some of the Nationalist troops there, and he's moving into this district!"

"Using runners, eh?" Corrigan grinned. "You must have the jumps, Hewitt. There's no reason to worry about the rebels. They're only interested in chasing the Nationalists out of the provinces, not running American capital out."

The third shot came from Woody's gun.

"They're interested in everything they can get their hands on," Hewitt said angrily, his heavy-browed eyes flaring. "They're nothing but a dirty rabble of cutthroat bandits. They've murdered residents in every station they have come to! I'm sending a message to Shanghai to-night, asking for a detachment of marines. And I'll stand a better chance of getting them if your company asks protection with me."

"Count me out," Corrigan said with a laugh. "I'm not going to be responsible for dragging the marines in here on a false alarm."

Hewitt's lips tightened. "I'll send for them myself!" he spat out. The door slammed angrily behind him as he left.

"YOU'D better find a way of stopping him, Corrigan." There was an ominous calm in Woody's voice. "If the marines come in here this deal is off."

"Getting soft?" Corrigan jeered at Woody.

"No." Woody stared at him with a frank gaze, a hard glint in his eyes. "But I'm an ex-marine. The outfit in Shanghai is my old outfit. The boys in it are my old pals. I don't care what happens to me—I don't even mind pulling the wool over their eyes once in a while—but I'll be damned if I'm going to be a party to a scrap where any one of them is liable to be killed! Especially by machine guns *I* brought!"

Corrigan leaned across the table. A lamp flared between the two men, bringing out the sudden hate in their eyes. "And I'm not going to lose the money I got tied up in this deal!" he barked.

"When is Cheng coming to raid the place?" Woody asked.

"Next week. He doesn't expect the stuff here before then."

"If you could get word to him that it's here now, he could grab it and duck before the marines get here," Woody said.

Corrigan hesitated. He knew he'd be better off getting rid of the stuff before the marines messed around. "Cheng's probably in the mountains this side of Ho Tao," he said. "It'll be a job to find him, but it's worth a try." He paused for a moment as he weighed his chances. Then: "I'll start at once!"

THE leathernecks had landed! Dog tired, dusty after their long march through the wild country, making their own trail part of the way, wading through muddy rivers, they were glad to get to the settlement, to find a place to bunk. Captain Halstead, head of the detachment, and Mac, his first lieutenant, headed for the American Oil station.

Hewitt was relieved to see them. "I've just warned all my employees to come here to the house in case of attack."

"Good." Halstead nodded his head.

"Are there any other white people in the village?"

"Two men up at the Transpacific warehouse," Hewitt replied. "Corrigan and a new fellow, Davis."

"Davis?" Mac perked his ears up. "What does he look like?"

"Young, rangy fellow, with black hair, middleweight. He came in a few days ago with a wagon train of supplies. A fellow named Dresnov had the job before but Corrigan mentioned that he had an accident in Shanghai."

Halstead had been listening closely. At the name of Dresnov his eyes lit up. "Did Dresnov happen to have a scar on his jaw?" he asked.

"Yes." Hewitt looked surprised. "Why?"

"We've heard of him. They're an outfit we've been looking for in Shanghai. We think they've been smuggling guns and ammunition into the interior for the bandits."

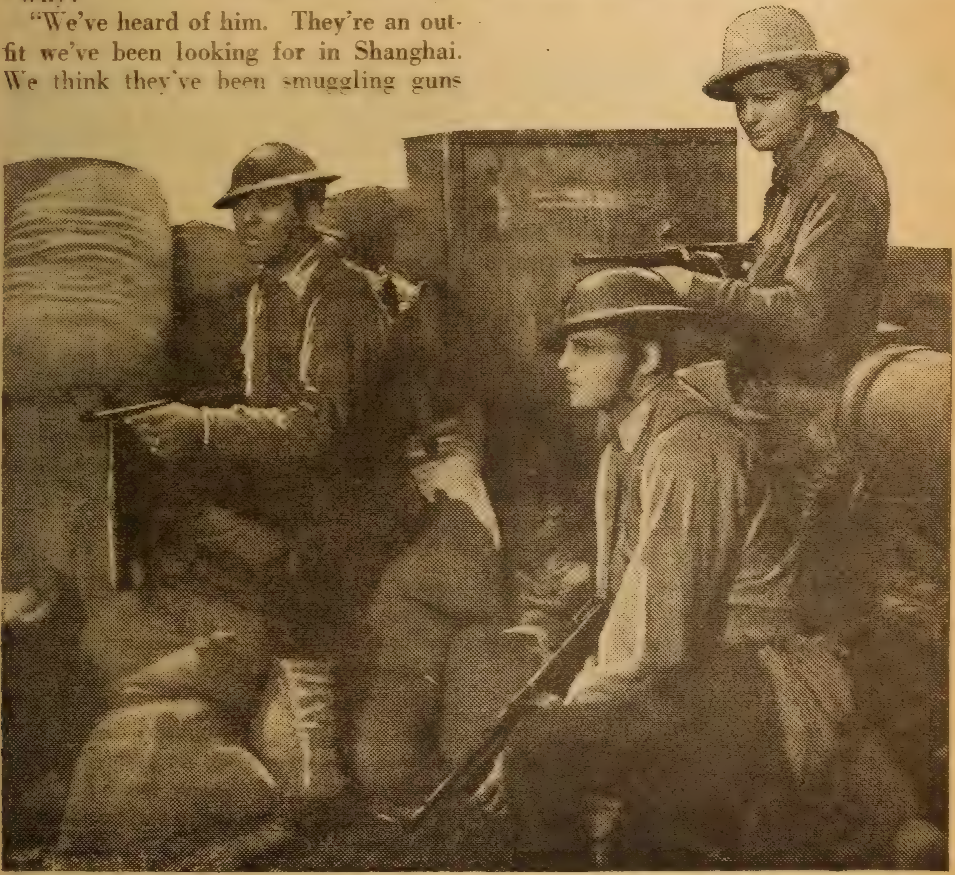
"But——" Hewitt began and then his eyes widened. "Say! No wonder Corrigan didn't want protection!"

"He didn't, eh?" Halstead turned to Mac. "Go up there with one of the men and get them!" he ordered.

Mac strode into the night. Woody Davis—it didn't seem possible! Woody was hot-tempered, all right, but to be messed up in a dirty game like this——

He stopped before a tall, lanky marine. "Bring your rifle, Tex, and follow me. We've got some work ahead of us!"

CORRIGAN and Woody were checking over the ammunition. They figured



"They're trying to rush us!"

Cheng would be there in half an hour.

"I didn't even have to mention the marines," Corrigan said. "They used up most of the ammunition in their last fight, and when I told them the stuff was here they jumped to get started. How soon will the marines get here?"

"I don't know," Woody replied truthfully. He had not heard of their arrival. He glanced around the warehouse. Ammunition boxes were piled against the walls.

Woody watched as Corrigan pried open a small box. In it were layers of egg-shaped hand grenades. Woody reached out, picked up a couple, and slipped them into his pocket. "Just in case they get tough," he said to Corrigan.

"Don't move!"

Somehow the voice was familiar to Woody. He turned, and his eyes met Mac's, then Tex's.

"Why——" He smiled, but the smile faded as he saw the automatic in Mac's hand, the rifle in Tex's. He looked at the men again, and saw that they were no longer his friends. They were staring at him with contempt.

"You're under arrest!" Mac addressed Corrigan, then turning to Woody, "You, too!"

"I've heard that before, but it sounds funny coming from you," Woody said. "I——"

The sudden thunder of rifles froze the words in Woody's mouth. With searing lead and blood-curdling cries, Cheng was announcing his arrival to all the world! The office doors crashed open, and the famous bandit confronted the four Americans!

"YOUR trap didn't work, Mr. Corrigan!" He spoke with venomous hatred in his voice as his men disarmed Tex and Mac. "We are ready for your marines in spite of your foolish trickery!"

"I didn't——" Corrigan began, but two reports from Cheng's automatic cut off his words. He crumpled to the floor, his mouth still open, his body striking the ground with a thud. Woody saw the Lueger bear on him.

"Corrigan didn't know the marines were here!" he cried, the veins in his temples heavy with rage. He was more angry at the cold, ruthless killing than afraid of the next shot.

"You work for him?" the bandit leader asked.

"Yes," Woody admitted.

Cheng turned, barked out orders to his men. They came forward, grabbing Mac and Tex suddenly. It was no easy job. It took three men to overpower Mac and as many to control Tex. But they were both finally bound fast to posts. They jerked Woody's automatic from his pocket, but left him free.

Cheng approached Mac. "How many marines are in the village?" he snarled at him.

Mac might have been deaf. Only the look of cold contempt on his face revealed that he had heard the question.

With a brutal gesture, Cheng struck Mac full in the face with the barrel of his automatic. Not a sound came from Mac's lips as the steel tore across his flesh, leaving an ugly red-flowing gash.

Tex squirmed in his ropes, glaring at Woody for letting Mac take it, for standing there, doing nothing, saying nothing. But Woody's face was expressionless, without emotion.

"IS that the ammunition?" The rebel chief turned, addressing Woody and indicating the boxes.

"Yes," Woody admitted. He knew well enough that the men would find the stuff themselves. Only the machine guns were well enough disguised to avoid detection. It was better to play into their hands, play their game until he found an opening, a way out, a way to do something.

Cheng was quick to notice that there was something missing. "Where are the machine guns?" he snapped at Woody.

"There aren't any," was Woody's calm reply. "I couldn't get them out of the Shanghai warehouse. The settlement was blockaded so tight you couldn't have smuggled them out in a funeral procession!"

He spoke the last words slowly, carefully, glancing at Mac to see if their meaning had penetrated. The sudden light in Mac's eyes, the faint smile did Woody's heart good. Mac understood now. Woody may have been responsible for one marine's death but he would lay his life down for these fellows!

Cheng walked over to the rice bags. "What's in these sacks?"

"Food supplies," Woody replied. He met the bandit's questioning look without blinking an eyelash. The man felt the sack, then drew out his knife and slashed into it. Rice gushed to the floor. He felt the sack again, grunted, and turned.

Men arrived with a wagon now and started to load ammunition. Sounds of rifle fire stuttered through the night. Woody became aware that the Chinese rebels were fighting to hold off the marines—that a furious battle had been raging while he and his two friends had been at Cheng's mercy!

He strolled about casually, watching the men load the ammunition. The wagon finally left, only a rebel officer and a guard remaining.

SUDDENLY Woody saw the officer turn his eyes on the rice sack as he approached it slowly, watching the trickle

Woody leaped to his feet and sent the grenade pegging to the warehouse.

of rice. The hard angular shape of a machine gun showed through the burlap bag! He snapped an order to the guard who ran out, then turned to Woody.

"No machine guns!"

The tone of his voice was veiled with threats of what was in store for Woody. But Woody was looking at Corrigan's body, still lying in a pool of blood. They had overlooked the gun that was still in the dead man's holster!

Mac's eyes, too, saw the gun loosely strapped to the dead man's side. He sensed what was in Woody's mind and did the first thing he could think of to distract the officer's attention.

"I'll tell you how big our outfit is!" he said suddenly.

The officer turned at Mac's voice. As he turned Woody dove for Corrigan's gun!

A bullet from the officer's Lueger jolted his shoulder as he jerked the gun out. Another tore the floor beside him. But the third shot came from Woody's gun, and the officer's Lueger clattered to the floor. His twisted, limp body slumped after it!

THE captive marines grinned as Woody rushed to the front doors, bolting them. Then, with a knife from the officer's body, he slashed the ropes that bound Tex and Mac with quick rapid strokes.

"Good work, Woody!" Mac said.

"If they get hold of those machine guns we won't have a chance!" Woody said. "Let's get at them, ourselves, before Cheng does! They're all assembled, ready to fire."

Without a moment's hesitancy, they tore at the sacks, digging through the rice, getting at the guns. Woody broke open a crate for drums of machine-gun bullets. Grabbing a drum, he slammed it onto his gun and darted to a window. A party of bandits summoned by the guard were approaching! They were only about twenty yards away!

"They're coming up!" he warned the others. He jammed the muzzle through the windowpane, and started the "typewriter" on its conversation of death!

His first blast crumpled the front line. The others dropped to the ground, opening fire on the warehouse! Bullets smashed through the thin walls, tore at the heavy timbers.

Tex stood, feet apart at the door. He slammed the drum home on his gun, had another tucked under his arm.

"They're trying to rush us!" Woody yelled to him.

"Move away from there, babies!" he shouted as he trained his gun on the doors, cutting loose, sweeping back and forth across them. The cries on the other side, the sound of falling bodies told him the attack was momentarily stopped.

"THERE'S a new bunch coming up this side," Mac yelled from another window.

"We won't be able to hold out!" Woody shouted from his place.

"We ain't doin' so badly," Tex snorted, letting out another blast. "Say—is that stuff against the wall labeled 'dynamite'?"

"It sure is," Woody nodded.

"Thought so!" He paused while he directed a withering blast through his window. "I don't like seeing bullets chipping the corners of those boxes," he said.

"Say!" Woody exclaimed. "That's the way to keep the guns from them!" He dug into his pocket and held out a hand grenade. "How about going out the back way and laying an egg on this place? With all the dynamite in those cases——"

The three men looked at each other. Mac grinned slowly. "We won't have much chance of getting through, but it will be fun to watch!"

Tex gritted his teeth. "O. K. with me. Let's shove!"

Woody peered out of the back door as Tex and Mac put fresh drums on their guns. "All set!" he said over his shoulder. "This has to be quiet, though. Don't shoot unless you have to!"

OUT they went, plunging into the darkness, crouching on their hands and knees. A bullet sang above them! Seen already! They threw themselves flat on their bellies, lying motionless for a moment.

They saw Cheng and his men run into the building to investigate the sudden stillness.

"This is far enough," Woody whispered tensely.

"Let 'er go!" Mac breathed. "We'll keep 'em down for you!" The men cut loose with a sudden, wide-sweeping blast of fire.

Woody leaped to his feet, grenade in hand and sent it pegging to the warehouse. It crashed through a window and a terrific blast flung him to the quaking ground.

The roof shot to the sky in a thousand bits. Men hurled, soaring up only to fall back to what was now a roaring pit of flames.

The survivors opened up anew on the three Americans.

"Let's go!" Woody shouted, turning to Tex. But Tex jerked forward suddenly, his head slumping on his hand.

"TEX!" Woody crawled to him. He knew what had happened the minute he put his hand on Tex's shoulder, yet he didn't want to believe.

He turned the marine over. Tex—they'd gotten Tex! A bullet cracked in the dirt beside Woody. He struggled back to Mac.

The warehouse flames lit the sky, now. "It's making good targets of us," Woody said. He looked ahead and saw three big steel oil drums, two upright, one lying flat, about fifty yards away. "Let's make a run for them!" he said.

"O. K.!"

They both gave a final burst of fire from their guns, then scrambled to their feet in a mad dash—bullets whining, tearing the dirt all around them.

Woody turned to say something to Mac. But Mac was pitching forward, an agonized look on his face. Woody ran back, kneeling beside him.

"Mac!" He was still alive! Clutching his gun, Woody held Mac under his free arm, dragging him toward the oil drum barricade.

There was no let-up in the crashing about him, but on he went. Those few yards seemed like miles. He felt dizzy, dazed, exhausted. The drums! If—only—he—could—reach——

He sank to the ground, pulling Mac's body with him, safe behind the drums!

A bullet cracked suddenly, hitting the rounded side of the flat tank. In the fleeting instant, he saw the steel dent under the leaden impact. But he failed to see the bullet flatten out and deflect then, flying straight at his head. Suddenly—blackness.

WOODY opened his eyes. Nothing but infinite whiteness before him. Then a face came into view, a familiar face.

"Mac," he managed.

"Hi, Woody. How're you feeling?"

"Why, all right, I guess. You?"

"Fit and ready to go. You'll be all right, too."

The face was gone, he stared at the whiteness again. Sure, hospitals were white. He saw another face now. Captain Halstead.

"We came to tell you that we want you back, Woody. We're shoving off next week. The doctor says you'll be ready to go then."

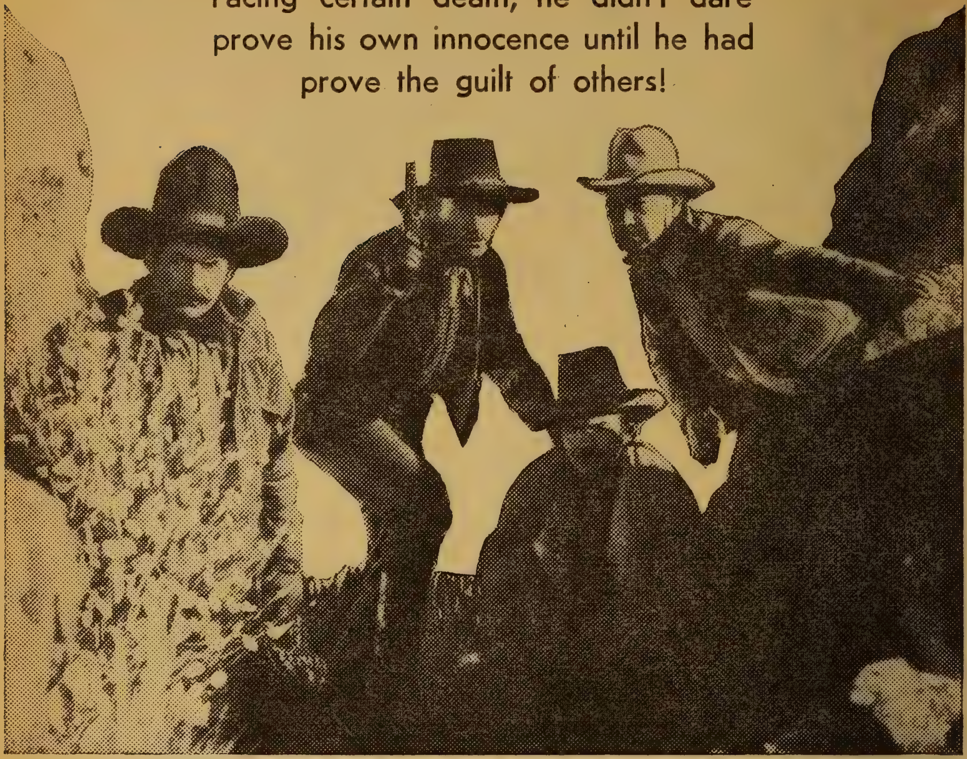
"Where are we headed for, captain?" Woody asked.

"The Philippines. Can't promise you much action, though."

Woody smiled gratefully. He was a leatherneck again!

SILVER SPURS

Facing certain death, he didn't dare prove his own innocence until he had prove the guilt of others!



JIM FENTRISS, foreman of the Two-Diamond spread, stopped abruptly as he stepped inside the stable, the muscles in his lean face tightening and his blue eyes losing their good-natured look.

Two men stood before him, one heavy-set, dark-faced, with evil stamped in his eyes and over his crafty features. The second was young, not more than twenty, a sharp-faced boy, with flashing dark eyes and a head of black hair.

The older of the two, Durango, swerved at the sound of Jim entering, letting his right hand fall to the butt of his gun. A sneer distorted his face as he stalked insolently out of the barn.

"I want to talk to you, Kid," Jim said hoarsely to the boy, dubbed the "Yuma Kid" by the cowboys. "Don't get too thick with Durango. He's bad medicine."

The Yuma Kid's thin face curled up in a sneer.

"What I do is my business!" he shot back. "If you had half the nerve of Durango, you'd be a man!"

"I'm trying to warn you," Jim answered quietly.

"If you don't like my style, why don't you fire me?" the Kid sneered. "You ain't got the nerve to fire Durango. Now get out of here before I go for my guns because some time I'm going to have to blow your brains out!"

The Kid's hands went for his six guns. Jim looked at him wearily, his arms hanging limply at his side. The Kid gave a taunting laugh and walked out of the barn.

For a long moment, Jim stood staring into space, his face and eyes wearing a peculiar expression. The sneering attitude of the Yuma Kid, and his childish boast about blowing his brains out, did not worry Jim.

Yet he knew he would never have taken that threat from any other living man. Durango with all his vaunted gun play, would never have dared to make it. Even "Silverspurs" Holden, who was behind the gang of outlaws and rustlers that were terrorizing the country, and who had sent Durango to the Two-Diamond Ranch to line up the men as rustlers, would have thought twice before risking the lightning speed of Jim Fentriss on the draw.

AS Jim Fentriss stood staring into space, two people were watching him—two people who had heard the threat of Yuma Kid and had seen Jim swallow it without a word.

One of these was a girl, Janet Allison, who had arrived at the ranch two weeks before from the East. She was young and pretty, with the culture of an eastern finishing school combined with the strength of character expected in the daughter of Webb Allison, owner of the Two-Diamond spread.

Her arrival in town had been heralded with a hold-up of the express boxes holding the money for the bank. It had been her first taste of the reign of lawlessness that had spread into the country. She had seen Silverspurs Holden, the man heading the gang of outlaws. She had seen the robbery take place with no attempt on the part of the sheriff to interfere.

Jim Fentriss had driven her home, taking the long route. She was stubborn and accustomed to having her own way. Jim had not given it to her. She had protested and fought, but she had admired him for it.

Yet now, how could she be sure?

That the Yuma Kid was mixed up with the Silverspurs gang, represented on the Two-Diamond spread by Durango, was obvious to everyone. That Jim Fentriss had taken the insult from the Yuma Kid as if he were afraid to either fire him or Durango was too obvious to Janet.

As Jim finally turned to walk out of the stable, he saw her. Her eyes were cold and mocking. He flushed, mumbled some unintelligible word, and walked away from her rapidly.

The second person who had witnessed the scene with the Yuma Kid was "Drag," an old gnarled Western fighter, who got his nickname because of an affected drag of his hand as he went for the draw. This dragging of his right hand had fooled many a would-be killer, and in the West there were few who could beat Drag on the draw.

Drag was a government agent, sent to investigate Silverspurs Holden and his gang and to break them up. His wrinkled old face took on an amazed and puzzled look as he listened to the Yuma Kid's conversation with Jim. It wasn't the first time he had seen the two to-

THE CAST

BUCK JONES	Jim Fentriss
Muriel Evans	Janet Allison
J. P. McGowan	Webb Allison
Robert Fraser	Art Holden
Bruce Lane	The Yuma Kid

Story by Charles Alden Seltzer.
Screenplay by Joseph Franklin Poland.
Directed by Ray Taylor.
Produced by Buck Jones.

UNIVERSAL PRODUCTION

A fictionization of the Universal picture of the same title.

gether. It was one of the first things he had noticed when he arrived to work under cover on the Two-Diamond spread.

FROM the stable, Drag went directly to the ranch house, where old Webb Allison was in his office.

"Webb," Drag demanded, "do you trust Fentriss?"

"Sure," Allison shot back, "I'd trust him anywhere."

"He spends too much time with the Yuma Kid," Drag answered. "The Kid is mixed up with Silverspurs Holden and Durango. Fentriss knows this, and yet he doesn't fire him."

"I can't explain that," Allison said, "but Jim is one hundred per cent square!"

Drag shook his head and then related what he had heard in the stable, warning Allison that Fentriss would bear watching.

While this conversation was going on, Jim was riding across the range. He was headed for no place in particular. He wanted to be alone, to try to figure things out. The presence of Janet in the stable worried him. His conversation with the Yuma Kid made him feel sick all over.

He knew a show-down had come. He had tried to postpone it until he had learned how many men on the ranch had lined up with Durango. The scene with the Yuma Kid, witnessed by Janet, made it impossible for him to go any further with his original plan. Now he could no longer delay the show-down with Durango. But the Yuma Kid——

Suddenly Jim's body stiffened. Far ahead, in a small canyon, he saw some one riding rapidly, headed for an old deserted cabin. He saw that it was a girl, and despite the distance he recognized Janet's horse and the scarf around her neck. From another direction he saw a man riding toward her.

It was Dude, one of his own cowboys. The sight of the girl he believed to be Janet, riding on her way to a rendezvous with Dude, stunned Jim. He watched the two riders approaching each other, each headed for the cabin.

They disappeared over a sharp incline. Jim waited a minute and then turned his horse in the direction of the cabin, deciding to investigate. Fifteen minutes later he rounded a small knoll and came in sight of the cabin again.

A woman's scream, pitiful and frantic, cut the air. Jim gave his horse rein, and it raced for the cabin and the screaming girl. With a flying leap Jim was on the ground, running for the front door of the cabin. He burst inside, then stopped abruptly.

HE was staring at the back of Durango, who was struggling with a girl! Durango turned. The girl pulled away and disappeared out the rear of the cabin before Jim had a look at her face.

And as Durango turned there was no time to investigate. Durango's right hand streaked from his holster. But with lightning speed, Jim's gun came out, crashed down on Durango's wrist, knocking the gun from his hand!

With a bellow of rage, Durango lunged at him. Jim side-stepped the lunge, bringing his right around in a sharp uppercut that cracked against Durango's jaw, sending him tottering back. Durango bounced back, charging at Jim with a bull-like rush.

Jim met this rush with blows that sapped the furious strength of Durango. For weeks Jim had waited for this chance. All his pent-up fury, all the hatred he had held for this man, whom he knew was organizing good cowmen to work for Silverspurs Holden, found expression in his blows.

A right crossed over a sharp left sent Durango to the floor, a bloody, squirming heap. He tried to get up, but couldn't.

"You've been asking for this for a long time," Jim said. "When you get yourself together, come to the ranch and get your pay. You'll need it to get out of the country."

Durango's only answer was a groan. Jim turned and walked out of the cabin, his mind still dazed at the sight of Janet riding for the cabin. Where had she gone to so suddenly? What had happened to Dude? These questions leaped through Jim's mind as he jumped on his horse and rode away.

Inside the cabin, Durango struggled to his feet. His gun lay on the floor near him. He picked it up, stumbled out of the cabin and around the corner. Jim was riding away from him, his back making a perfect target. Durango raised his gun slowly, taking a careful aim.

His fingers started to close on the trigger, but as they did, a shot came from somewhere behind him. For a split second Durango stiffened. The gun dropped from his hand, and then he slumped to the ground in a lifeless heap.

BACK at the ranch, Jim went to the ranch house, looking for his boss. Allison was nowhere to be found, but Janet was there with Peggy Wyman, a girl friend visiting her from the East. Peggy lay on a couch, her face pale and her eyes filled with terror.

"Seen Dude around here?" Jim asked Janet coldly.

A half-amused smile came to her face as she answered: "Did you expect to find him here?"

"I'm firing him," Jim replied curtly. "Fooling around too much with girls and not doing his work!"

"There are others you might discharge, too," Janet taunted. "Durango and the Yuma Kid, for instance."

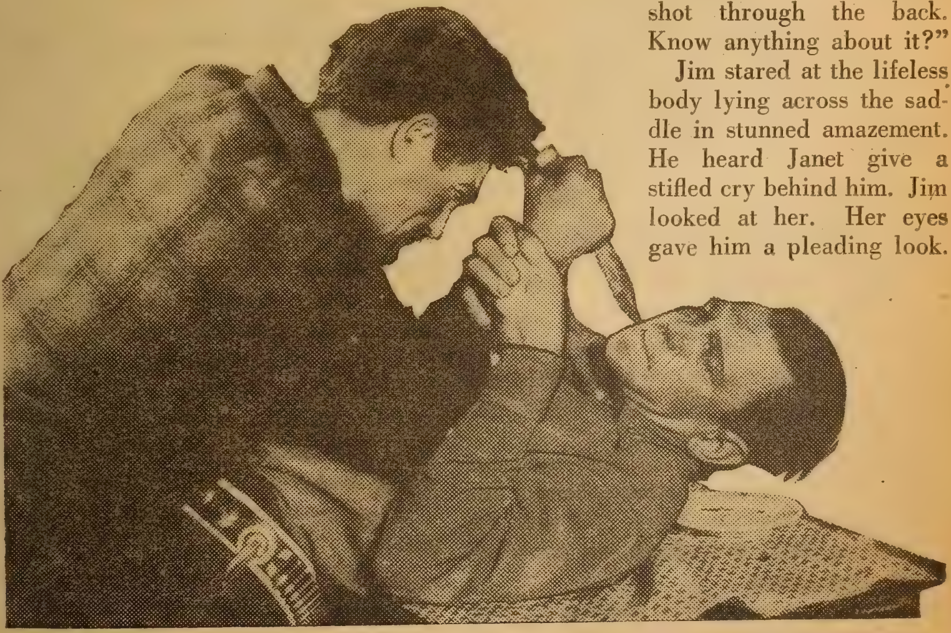
Jim flushed at the mocking insult. He tried to control his feelings.

"I just fired Durango," he said.

The sound of horse's hoofs outside the house stopped any further conversation. Jim went to the door and saw Webb Allison, Drag, and several cowboys. Across Allison's saddle lay an inert body.

"Jim," Allison said, "the boys found Durango dead outside the east cabin. He was beaten up and then shot through the back. Know anything about it?"

Jim stared at the lifeless body lying across the saddle in stunned amazement. He heard Janet give a stifled cry behind him. Jim looked at her. Her eyes gave him a pleading look.



With a bellow of rage, Durango lunged at him.

"Why, no," Jim answered casually. "I don't know who could have killed him."

"We've sent for the sheriff," Allison said. "And here he comes now!" he added as hoofbeats broke the stunned silence.

Two men were riding toward the ranch house. Behind them were a number of cowboys led by the Yuma Kid—the cowboys on the ranch friendly to Durango and Holden.

And with the sheriff was Silverspurs Holden himself! The hands of Allison and Jim went for their guns at the sight of the rustler, but a word of warning from Drag caused them to let their guns alone.

"The sheriff is in with Holden," Drag warned. "All he needs is an excuse to start trouble!"

IN the ranch house, Peggy Wyman was in hysterics. Janet was standing over her, trying to quiet her nerves.

"What shall I do," Peggy wailed. "If I'm questioned I'll have to say——"

"—that Jim Fentriss fought Durango and killed him?" Janet cut in. "You can't do that! You've got to keep out of sight until the sheriff leaves—and then you have to leave for home. It's the only way!"

"I didn't mean any harm, riding your horse out to meet Dude," Peggy wailed. "Durango rode up to the cabin at the same time and Dude got scared and ran. Then Jim came in and I slipped out the back door before he saw me——"

"Keep quiet!" Janet warned. "As soon as the sheriff leaves I'll have you driven to town."

Outside, the sheriff and Holden were looking at Jim with accusing eyes. Behind them was the Yuma Kid and the cowboys, ready to back up any gun play that might start.

"You were around the east cabin, Fentriss," the sheriff said to Jim. "And you didn't get along with Durango."

"Not so well," Jim agreed. "He wasn't a good worker—for *this* outfit."

Silverspurs Holden, tall and suave and brutal in looks, flushed angrily at the pointed answer.

Webb Allison looked sharply at him and demanded: "Just what is your interest in this, Holden?"

The sheriff answered before Holden could collect his wits. "Holden's my deputy. He's going to help me solve this murder."

"Like you solved the robbery in the station in town?" Allison asked meaningfully.

"Those robbers were strangers," the sheriff hedged uncomfortably, "and they got away."

"It's silly to say that!" It was Janet, standing white-faced but resolute in the open doorway of the ranch house. "One of those robbers is right here! That man, Holden! I saw him leading the bandits myself!"

THE Yuma Kid stiffened. His hand crept toward his holster. The men with him tensed for gun play. Holden glanced over his shoulder at his men, his eyes cold and deadly.

"You're dead wrong, young lady," the sheriff answered angrily. "Art Holden was at Dry Creek with me all that day! We came here to get Durango's killer—and we're not leaving until we do!"

The Yuma Kid's gun snapped out of the leather. His men moved in closer to the sheriff and Holden, each making a swift draw. The eyes of the sheriff and Holden were on Jim. He looked at Janet and then at her father, as if trying to make up his mind what to do.

There was no question that he was cornered.

He had no illusions what would happen to him if he were arrested and taken to town. He'd never get there alive—he knew that! It was Holden's and the sheriff's chance to get him out of the way.

Yet if he fought it out on the ranch, Janet and her father would be in sudden, inescapable danger from the flying lead!

Jim's decision came with startling rapidity. The sheriff's horse was near him. Jim twisted slightly to the right, raising his body up on his right toe. Then he sprang, a long, leaping dive for the neck of the horse! His arms went around the neck as he swung his legs up!

His flying feet caught the sheriff on the shoulders, knocking him to the ground. The horse leaped forward, Jim flying hard over the neck. For one breathless instant every person in front of the ranch house was dazed by the swiftness of Jim's action.

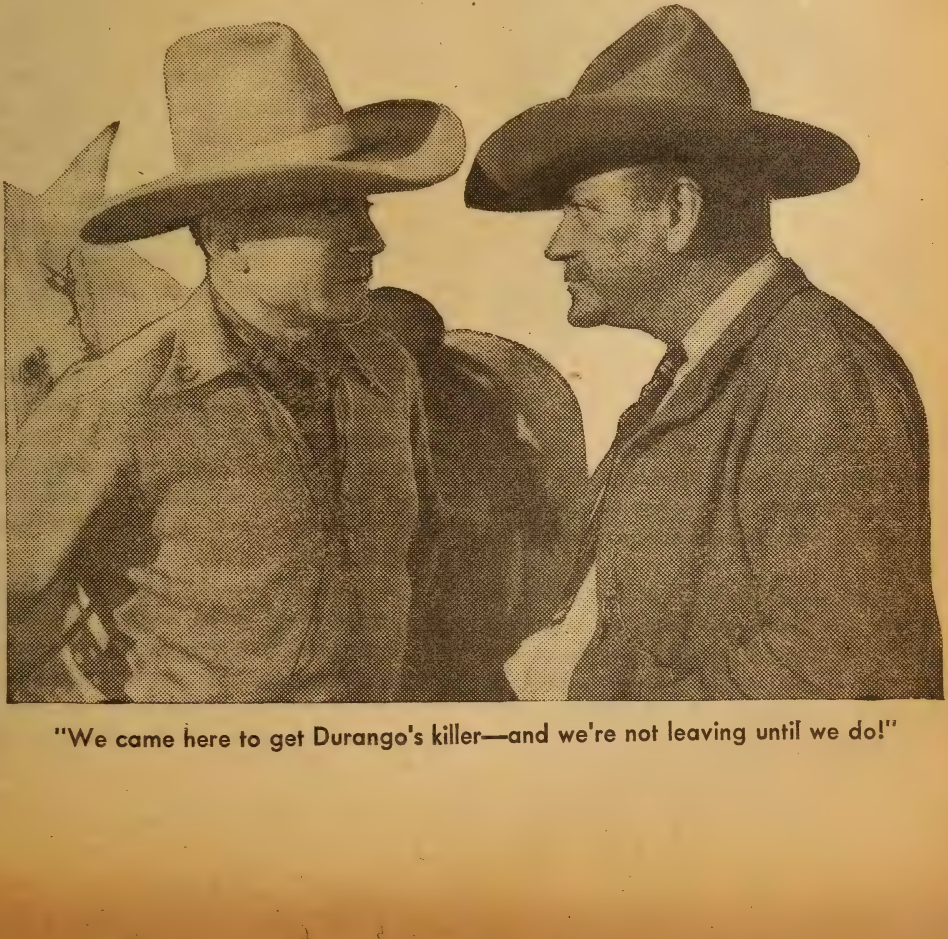
Then the Yuma Kid and Holden came to life with roaring guns. They whirled their horses in the direction Jim was taking, but the sheriff's horse was too fleet for them. Jim headed into the bad lands that lay to the east of the Two-Diamond Ranch.

THREE hours later he rode down a shallow wash gully on the far side of the bad lands. The Yuma Kid and his men had long since lost Jim's trail. Jim knew he would be safe for several hours —until the sheriff got to town and organized a posse to search for him.

It would no longer be a question of Holden and the sheriff arresting him. His flight from the ranch would be sufficient evidence of guilt for the sheriff to organize a posse of at least fifty men who would shoot him on sight for a fugitive outlaw. He had walked into their trap—and he knew too well that that trap meant certain death!

It did, unless——

Jim turned his horse to the west and started back through the bad lands. His mind was made up now. He knew defi-



"We came here to get Durango's killer—and we're not leaving until we do!"

Jim squeezed the trigger, but there was only a dull snap.

nitely what his plan of action must be from this point on. And the first thing to be done was to return to the Two-Diamond, even though it might mean his death!

Evening was falling as he rode out of the bad lands and onto the range of the Two-Diamond spread. He knew that by this time several posses would be searching for him. But he had to take the chance.

To his right he saw a buckboard driving rapidly along. He saw Janet and Peggy in it. A man from the Two-Diamond outfit was at the reins. Jim raced toward the buckboard, catching up to it as it was making a sharp turn in the road.

At the sight of him, Janet gave a startled cry.

"Jim, we're taking Peggy to town! She's leaving for home so she can't testify against you!"

Jim looked at her and then at Peggy in amazement.

"Listen, Mr. Fentriss," Peggy said. "I was the girl in that cabin. It wasn't Janet!"

"Did you kill Durango?" Jim asked.

Peggy shook her head and countered with: "Did you?"

"I didn't," Jim answered viciously. "And I don't know who did. But I'm going to find out—if I get killed doing it!"

"You must be careful, Jim," Janet warned. "Holden and the sheriff will kill you on sight. But meet me to-morrow noon at Eagle Rock near that old cabin, and if I'm able to find out anything in the meantime, I'll tell you then."

Jim nodded and turned his horse away in the direction of the cabin. His mind played with a strange theory about the murder. At the cabin, he hid his horse in a clump of bushes.

HE did not go in the cabin. The night was falling in a gray light of twilight. At the corner of the building, he looked down at the ground and saw where Durango had fallen in death. Blood was there—a large, dark splotch that had caked the dirt.

Jim walked directly away from this spot, headed off at an angle. Durango had been shot in the back. If Durango had been watching him as he rode away after the fight, the bullet had been fired from this direction. And wherever the killer had stood, there might still be traces!

At a clump of bushes some thirty yards from the cabin, Jim stopped, dropped to his hands and knees, and examined the ground. In the twilight, he could see the faint outlines of footprints. There was a half-burned cigarette stub.

Jim stood up. The killer of Durango had hidden in that clump of trees, waiting for his chance to give the fatal shot. But who could it have been? Jim got down on his hands and knees again, feeling along the ground with his fingers. They touched something soft.

In the twilight it was only a dark piece of cloth. Jim stood up, lit a match, and looked at the cloth. The muscles in his face tautened. The lines contracted about his mouth.

The cloth was a handkerchief, an expensive red silk bandanna, with a dark rose woven in the center. Jim stared at it with startled eyes for a moment, and then crushed it in his hand and walked slowly to where his horse was tied.

From the cabin he rode to the top of a high, knoll-like hill that overlooked the country for several miles. He dismounted, led his horse behind a boulder, and then went back to the top of the knoll and lay flat on his stomach.

Darkness had fallen, but an early moon was rising slowly, casting a bluish haze of light over the earth. For over an hour Jim lay there. The moon rose higher. The bluish haze grew brighter. Weird and ghostlike, the white rocks rose up on the moonlit mist. A deep canyon yawned up at Jim like a pit of death!

At the end of an hour, Jim saw the blackness move far below him. A horseman came out into the moonlight. Another joined him. And then a third came out of the night. Furtive and stealthy, the three riders moved over a narrow trail.

Suddenly their horses turned to the right and disappeared in the darkness. Jim was on his feet, running to his horse. He leaped in the saddle and rode slowly down to the trail where the three horsemen had been. Jim did not ride along this trail. He kept to the right, in the darkness of a ledge of rocks.

He came to the spot where the three had disappeared. He saw a yawning black hole that led into the side of a hill. He knew that beyond this cave must lay the Lost Canyon, which could otherwise be entered only by a dangerous scaling of steep cliffs.

The dark hole where the three horsemen had ridden was a secret entrance. Jim was sure it must lead to Holden's hide-out, but he made no move to enter. Instead, he turned his horse and started back toward the Two-Diamond Ranch. The handkerchief in his pocket, found where the killer of Durango had stood, was more important to him than Holden's hide-out!

A LIGHT burned in the library window of the ranch house when Jim rode into the yard. He came up cautiously from the rear, every nerve alert for signs of the sheriff or Holden. But the corral and the outbuildings were silent and deserted.

Jim jumped to the ground and started for the ranch house. As he neared the open window of the library, a man came out of the darkness, carrying a saddle and a blanket. Jim stopped, jumping back in some bushes. It was the Yuma Kid.

Jim walked out of the bushes and up to the Kid. "Where are you going?" he asked quietly.

The Kid started in surprise, his hands unable to go for his guns because of the saddle and the blanket.

"I'm through with this outfit, and you, too!" the Kid snarled. "I'm quitting."

"Joining up with Holden for good?" Jim murmured.

The Kid dropped his saddle and blankets. His hand went for his gun, but Jim's right shot out and knocked him off balance.

"Let me alone!" the Kid cried. "I'm sick of your interference! I ought to shoot you, but what's the use? I wouldn't be bothered plugging you!"

The Kid picked up his saddle and blanket and walked away, leaving Jim standing in the darkness, dejected and hands hanging limply at his sides.

At the window, Drag looked at Webb Allison. The two men had heard the conversation and witnessed the strange scene.

"I told you Fentriss was mixed up with the Yuma Kid and Holden," Drag said. "The Yuma Kid has something on him, to talk that way to a man that draws with the speed of Fentriss."

Webb Allison shook his head wearily.

"I guess you're right," he agreed. "It looks bad."

Jim entered the library. The two men turned and looked at him with suspicious eyes.

Jim wasted no words. "I found Holden's hide-out," he said. "It's in the Lost Canyon. I risked meeting a posse to come here to tell you. I'm more interested in Durango's murder now than the hide-out, but I'm willing to lead you through the secret entrance, if you want to raid it."

"When I raid Holden's hide-out," Allison said coldly, "I'll pick my own men for the job. You being around the ranch isn't very healthy for us, with the posse out searching for you."

Jim looked at Allison with a hurt expression in his eyes. He didn't understand what lay behind Allison's words, but he did know that he had been given a very pointed hint to leave the ranch and stay away. So without a word he turned and walked out of the house.

"To-morrow we'll take a bunch of loyal men and go into that hide-out," Drag said. "And I'm betting good money we'll find Jim Fentriss there with Holden!"

Allison nodded slowly, but said nothing.

AT noon the next day, Jim rode out of a box canyon, where he had spent the night, toward the cabin where he was to meet Janet. His mind was still dazed at the words of Allison the night before. He hoped Janet could give some logical reason for the sudden change in her father's attitude toward him.

He rode slowly, his eyes scanning the rocks and trails as he went. He knew Janet would be waiting for him on the old ledge of rocks to the east of the canyon. He got to the ledge, to the spot where Janet should have been, but she was nowhere to be seen.

His spirits sank. Had she deserted him? This thought flashed through his mind as he thought of the words of Allison. He reached in his pocket and picked out the red silk bandanna handkerchief dropped by Durango's killer. He looked at it with pain-filled eyes and stuffed it back in his pocket.

He started to turn his horse away. Something caught his eye. He was on the ground in a long jump. Lying in from of him, near the rock where Janet was to meet him was a torn piece of dress and a splotch of blood.

And scrawled on the white brimstone rock was the message: "Silverspurs Holden has taken me to his hide-out."

Jim wasted no time in staring at the message at the rock. With a leap he was on his horse, racing for the trail that led to the secret passage to Holden's hide-out!

In the hide-out, Holden was giving curt and sharp orders to his men to let Jim get into the canyon alive.

Through the window of an old shack, he said to Janet, who was held prisoner there: "When your hero finds you are gone, he will read your message to him. We're letting him get through the secret entrance—but then he'll be a dead hero!"

Janet's face was bloodless. Her eyes flashed, but she said nothing.

Out on the trail, Jim came to the spot where he had seen the three horsemen disappear. He turned to the right, followed a wash ravine a few yards and saw a large rock lying loosely against the opening. He jumped off his horse, heaved the rock aside and saw the dark tunnel leading through the hillside. Mounting again, he rode into the darkness of this opening, both hands gripping his six-guns!

He came out of the darkness onto a trail that led along a ledge of rocks. Only a grim, deathlike silence greeted him. He knew he was riding into Holden's hide-out, yet he had seen no one.

He came to the end of the ledge trail, rode down into Lost Canyon. At the far end he saw several old shacks and a pole corral. Jaws set and every muscle flexed, he rode for those buildings, knowing that any minute death would spurt out at him from hidden spots!

IN Holden's shack, men were waiting with rifles aimed at the oncoming rider. Janet had fallen to the floor, burying her face in her hands. Holden waited, watching Jim come closer. Holden's hand was up, ready to drop for the signal that would send a barrage of lead at Jim!

The hand moved slightly. Jim was within fifty yards of the shack, a perfect target. Holden's hand dropped, and five rifles spurted fire at Jim! For a split second he stiffened in the saddle, and then toppled forward, his hands grabbing the mane of his horse to keep from falling to the ground. With a wild yell, Holden's men jumped out into the open.

But their yells stopped suddenly. They stared in stark amazement at what they saw. Coming for them with the racing fury of a demented beast was the horse Jim was riding!

Blood flowing from his mouth and from a wound in his left side, Jim was hanging on the horse, his right hand holding a six-gun that was sending death to the men that had come out from cover! The fury of the horse's charge threw dismay into the ranks of Holden's men, and before they could get their senses back, Jim was in their midst, his gun taking a deadly toll!

The horse lunged. Jim fell to the ground. He came up with lightning speed. Holden was in front of him, bringing his gun down. Jim squeezed the trigger of his gun, but there was only a dull *snap.*

Behind Jim and around him, he was faintly conscious of another furious fight going on. Men were yelling weirdly. Guns roared and bullets screamed throught he air. Jim's brain was dazed and numb. He only knew that Holden was closing his finger around the trigger of his gun.

Jim plunged and dropped, his hard shoulder hitting Holden's knees. Holden's gun fired, the bullet going harmlessly over Jim's head. Holden thudded to the ground, with Jim on top of him. Holden snapped his right at Jim's chin, freeing himself and toppling Jim over onto the ground in an inert heap.

Holden leaped to his feet, ignoring the furious firing still going on all around him, and hurled himself at Jim's limp body. But Jim, blood-covered and groggy, saw him coming!

He rose up on his hands and knees, throwing his body in front of the charging Holden. Holden went over him, turning a somersault. Jim came up, dived for Holden's legs.

But Holden turned and caught him with a hard left to the mouth, sending him reeling back. Holden's hands reached for his gun. His fingers closed on it, brought it up! Jim, lying on the ground, shot his hands out for Holden's ankles. They closed around them and, with a yank, pulled Holden's feet out from under him.

He crashed to the ground, his head hitting a stone. He groaned weakly, rolled over on his side, limp and unconscious. Holden was beaten!

JIM staggered as he got to his feet. He looked around, blinked strangely at what he saw. Standing with his back to the wall of the shack, badly riddled with bullet, was the Yuma Kid.

Men lay piled around him. Three were standing. As Jim watched, powerless to act, the Kid's gun sent one of the outlaws to the ground! But then the others sent two more bullets tearing through the Kid's body. He sank to the ground.

From the edge of the canyon came the wild shouts of men. The two remaining outlaws looked up and saw Allison and Drag coming down the steep cliffs. The outlaws turned and ran, but their escape was cut off on all sides.

Jim stumbled over to the body of the Yuma Kid. He picked the body up, swayed weakly with the weight, and then stumbled into the shack as Janet opened the door.

Ten minutes later Allison and Drag came riding down to the shack. They walked into the cabin and saw Jim bending over the body of the Yuma Kid.

"I told you we'd find Fentriss here!" Drag said harshly.

Then Allison saw Janet. He gave a cry of surprise, but Janet motioned him to be still.

From the dying lips of the Yuma Kid came faint words, meant only for Jim's ears.

"You were right, Jim," he was saying. "I—I—I took—the wrong trail. You tried to help me—you always were a big brother to me—I was a fool. Maybe I'm heading for a better trail, though. I didn't know Holden wanted to kill you until I got here—I tried to get Holden—I fired too quick—I did my best, Jim—I got six of them before they got me——"

The Kid's words died away feebly. He closed his eyes and then opened them.

"Good-by, Jim," he whispered. "You got my red silk handkerchief there in your pocket—I lost it when I killed Durango. You knew all the time. Durango was going to kill you—and I got him! I guess I was too soft. I—loved you, Jim. I always loved you—brother——"

Jim stood up. He tried to say something, but the words died in his throat. The Kid looked up at him, smiled wanly, and then closed his eyes in death.

Janet's hand reached out for Jim's. He felt her touch and looked at her.

"I liked the Kid a heap," he said simply, brokenly.

Janet said nothing. Her hand remained in his. Allison looked at Drag, and the two men moved silently out of the shack.

THE GARDEN MURDER CASE

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, with Edmund Lowe, Gene Lockhart, and Virginia Bruce.

Another of S. S. Van Dine's, Philo Vance mysteries comes to the screen with Edmund Lowe playing the part of an erratic detective. It is a fast-moving and believable mystery, in which the attempts at smartness for a change do not overcrowd the suspense and action.

Recommended without reservation to anybody who likes mysteries. And who doesn't?

CALL OF THE PRAIRIE

A Paramount picture, with William Boyd and Muriel Evans.

Here is one of the best cowboy pictures ever to come to the screen. Adapted from the well-known book, "Hopalong Cassidy's Protégé," it presents a well-balanced story of action, drama, and fresh humor.

It is good to see a Western picture given a chance in its production. This one turned out perfectly.

THE AMATEUR GENTLEMAN

A United Artists picture, with Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., and Elissa Landi.

This is the first of Fairbanks, Jr.'s, attempts on picture production. It is not often that a star has as much sense in dramatic values as Mr. Fairbanks seems to have, which probably accounts for the fact that this is the first successful picture produced by an actor. THE AMATEUR GENTLEMAN is a costume picture, dating back in English history to the time of stage coaches and tri-cornered hats, but it has plenty of action and color. It is a story of a bold young man who breaks into society to save the life of his condemned inn-keeper father.

You will get a big laugh out of the 18th Century prize fight.

HERE COMES TROUBLE!

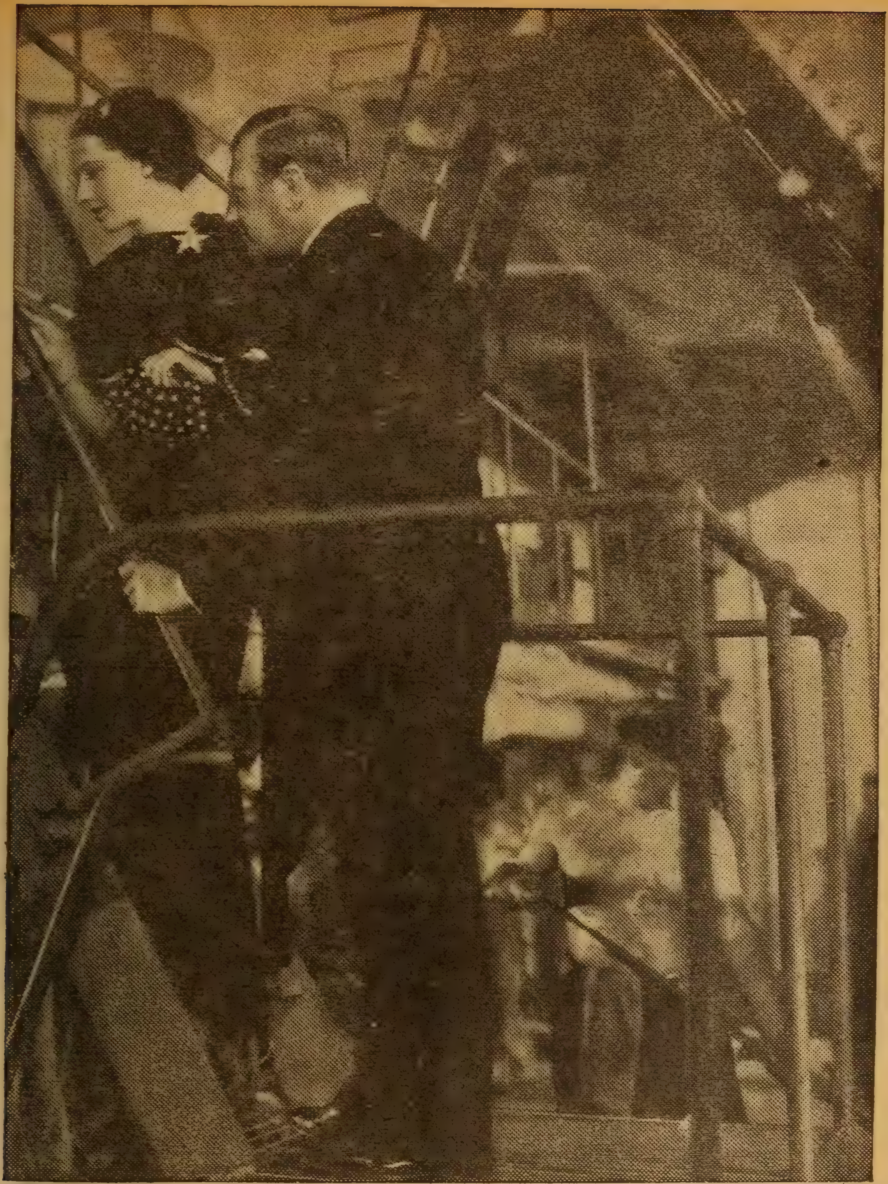
Hell pops loose in the stokehole!
A king's ransom in jewels is stolen
from the purser's safe! Avast, there!
Here comes trouble!

THE Mahal Ruby!

Ivan Ivanovitch Petroff lifted between appreciative finger tips the shimmering drop of pale blood-red which had once been the all-seeing eye of a great stone idol deep in the jungles of the Poonjab.

He turned the stone to and fro to catch the light and smiled pleasurably at its clear radiance. This was the end of a long, long search. For years he had followed the trail of blood which was the history of this fabulous stone.

Stolen long ago, passed from hand to hand, always with violence and bloodshed, the Mahal Ruby had acquired a reputation and a price. And Petroff,



THE CAST

PAUL KELLY..........Duke Donovan
Mona Barrie...........Evelyn Howard
Halliwell Hobbes.....Professor Howard
Gregory Ratoff............Ivan Petroff
Sammy Cohen.................Grimy

Story by John Bright and Robert Tasker.

Screenplay by Robert Ellis, Helen Logan, and Barry Trivers.

Directed by Lewis Seiler.

A fictionization of the 20th Century-Fox picture of the same title.

clever jewel trader that he was, had wanted it.

Bandits nowadays followed different tactics, Petroff thought wisely. He smiled obliquely at the suave little Hindu, Madrah Singh, in whose delicate fingers now lay Petroff's check for a hundred thousand dollars—purchase price of the ruby. Cutthroat no more, but bandit still, said Petroff to himself.

From his waistcoat pocket he removed a long Havana cigar. Carefully he slipped the band down, and with a last appreciative glance at the ruby, laid it in a little hole gouged in the cigar's fat middle. Deftly he slid the band up and replaced the cigar.

With polite adieus to Madrah Singh, Ivan Ivanovitch Petroff stepped out into the clear Havana sunshine and hailed a passing cab.

"Pier 15," he said. With his hand on the door, he turned. Some one had called his name.

Almost before he could breathe, two men had jostled him into the cab, greeting him with an effusion that hardly was in keeping with their actions. One of them, Petroff saw, was dapper and polite, with an English accent. But the other was dark and jowly, and very impolite. This one lost no time in gouging Petroff's well-padded ribs with the nose of a blunt automatic!

"Let's have it," he growled. "And don't waste no time about it!"

Petroff raised his eyebrows. "Oh, I see," he said politely, "you want the ruby?"

"Quit your stalling, mug," the thick man snapped, and started a thorough search of Petroff's person.

"You're wasting your time, gentlemen," Petroff assured them calmly.

"Oh, yeah?" The man dived triumphantly into Petroff's waistcoat pocket. "What's this?"

"A cigarette case. An heirloom. Only sentimental value——"

"Come on, come on!" the dapper man said impatiently. "Where is it?"

Petroff shook his head sorrowfully. "Sorry, gentlemen," he said. "I always anticipate the possibility of such a meeting, so I sent the ruby ahead by messenger."

They stared at him, open-mouthed. They were still confounded as the cab drew up to the pier.

"Well, here we are!" Petroff said cheerfully. "I must tear myself away."

He dismounted. "Smoke, gentlemen?" He proffered a large Havana cigar, and at their snarling refusal, placed it jauntily between his own teeth and strolled away.

Though he smiled, Petroff breathed a little more easily as the launch bore him toward the anchored ship. He had been wrong. All the cutthroats were not yet gone from Havana!

HE twirled the cigar between his lips. Wait till he told his shipmates, the Howards, this fine story! They had been much interested in his description of the ruby. He puffed up the ship's ladder and hastened toward the purser's office. Ah—there they were—Professor Howard, a dignified, scholarly man of his own age, and his daughter, Evelyn, a dark, beautiful girl with glowing eyes and a fascinating smile.

"Hello, hello, hello!" Petroff called, and Evelyn turned with a welcoming smile.

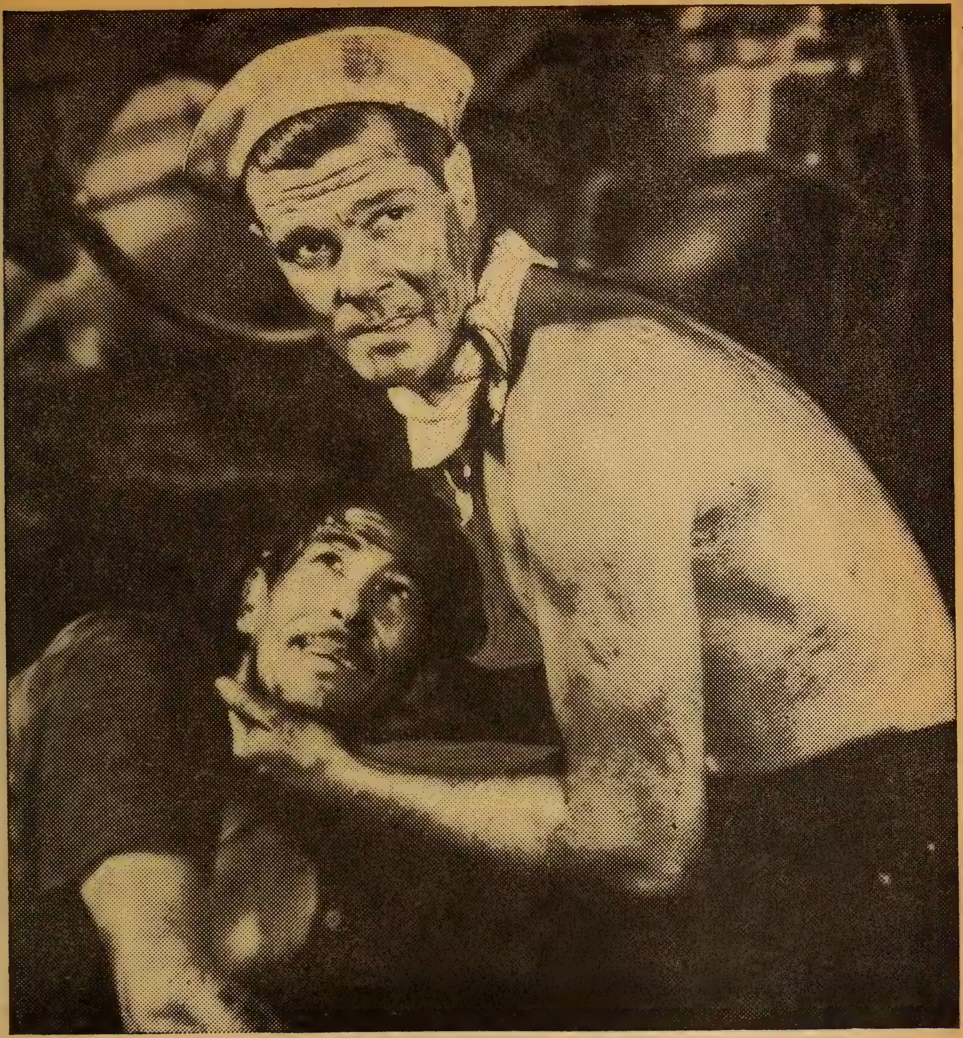
"Hello! Did Lady Luck smile on you?"

Petroff chortled. "Smile?" he said. "She laughed!"

"You have it?" the girl said eagerly.

Petroff removed the cigar from his mouth. "Right here," he said, pointing to his cigar. "It's colossal!"

With thumb and forefinger he slid down the cigar band. From its little gouged-out hole Petroff shook the ruby into his palm and rocked it back and



Duke staggered back to where Grimy lay . . . tried to lift him up.

forth to catch the light. Big, of an amazing lightness and clarity, it gleamed softly.

"It's beautiful!" Evelyn breathed.

"Isn't it gorgeous?" Petroff asked proudly.

"It's so gorgeous—that—it frightens me!" the girl said.

The professor put out his hand. "May I?" he asked, and Petroff laid the ruby in his palm. He stared at it, holding it between a trembling thumb and finger.

"Why, dad!" Evelyn said sharply, gripping his quivering wrist.

"Its—its tragic history makes me tremble," faltered the professor, and returned the stone.

"That's what makes it a good investment," Petroff said lightly. "I already have a customer in New York who will double my price. Mr. Brooks"—he turned to the purser—"will you put this away for me?"

"Yes, sir," said Brooks, taking out an

envelope. "Gosh, Mr. Petroff!" he exclaimed, staring down at the shimmering drop of color in his palm, "this must be worth more than the whole cargo!" His hands shook as he sealed the envelope and handed Petroff the receipt flap.

"What is this?" Petroff exclaimed jovially. "Everybody's nervous! Lock it up quick!" He turned to the professor and Evelyn. "Now, if you will join me at the bar, I would like to buy a drink. After all, we have reason to celebrate!"

"Yes, we *have!*" Evelyn exclaimed feelingly, and her father shot her a meaning look.

They were in the bar when the growing shudder and pound of the engines and the whistle's long hoot told them that they were on their way out of Havana harbor, northward bound once more.

AS they left the bar a short time later, walking toward their staterooms to dress for dinner, Evelyn Howard's attention was drawn by a sailor who, in the company of one of the ship's officers, was coming down from the bridge.

"Hello," she said brightly. "Don't I know you?"

The sailor's face reddened with embarrassment. He was a young man of the type which few people can embarrass—ordinarily smart and fresh. But obviously this chance meeting was too much for him.

"Y-yes'm," he admitted. "I—I'm Duke Donovan. Me and my pal—we sort of took over your taxicab back in Havana, I guess, ma'am."

Then Evelyn Howard remembered the two tornadoes in white and blue, flying before the stormy wrath of a Cuban café proprietor. They had leaped into the cab she was occupying and forced the driver to speed them to a place of comparative safety. It had been an amusing incident during her day ashore.

Duke tried to continue. "I want to tell you how sorry I——"

"Oh, you mustn't be," Miss Howard cut in. "It was most thrilling!"

The officer ordered Duke below decks and turned, when he had gone, to continue apologizing for Duke's actions on shore.

"Not at all," she insisted. "But wasn't he an officer of some sort? It seems to me his uniform——"

"He was," the officer replied grimly. "He used to be our third engineer. But they put him in jail in Havana after he wrecked that taxicab, and held up our sailing for an hour. The captain's reduced him and put him in the stokehole."

"Serves him right!" Professor Howard concurred heartily. "Such punishment is only fitting and proper. The man's more than likely just a thug! Come, my dear. Are you with us, Petroff?"

Together, the little party continued on their way. But not without further interruption. On the second deck, Petroff paused abruptly. Two men, mounting the stairs, looked very much like *his* friends of the Havana taxi!

Detaching himself from the Howards, he hurried a little. When he stepped inside his stateroom, complete chaos confronted him! The place had been hastily, thoroughly searched! He frowned a little, then reached inside his waistcoat for the purser's receipt, as if to reassure himself. Then he smiled. A little excitement on the trip, perhaps!

THAT night, while Evelyn Howard stood at the ship's rail, listening with apparently rapt attention to the solemn young purser, Mr. Brooks, discourse upon the science of navigation, the professor sat studiously regarding a volume titled, "Studies in Ethnology." But between the pages lay a sheet of paper bearing a carefully penciled floor plan—the plan of the purser's office, with doors and communicating corridors marked, and the safe outlined in red!

He hastily opened the book at another

place as Evelyn and Mr. Brooks approached, and looked up with an indulgent smile.

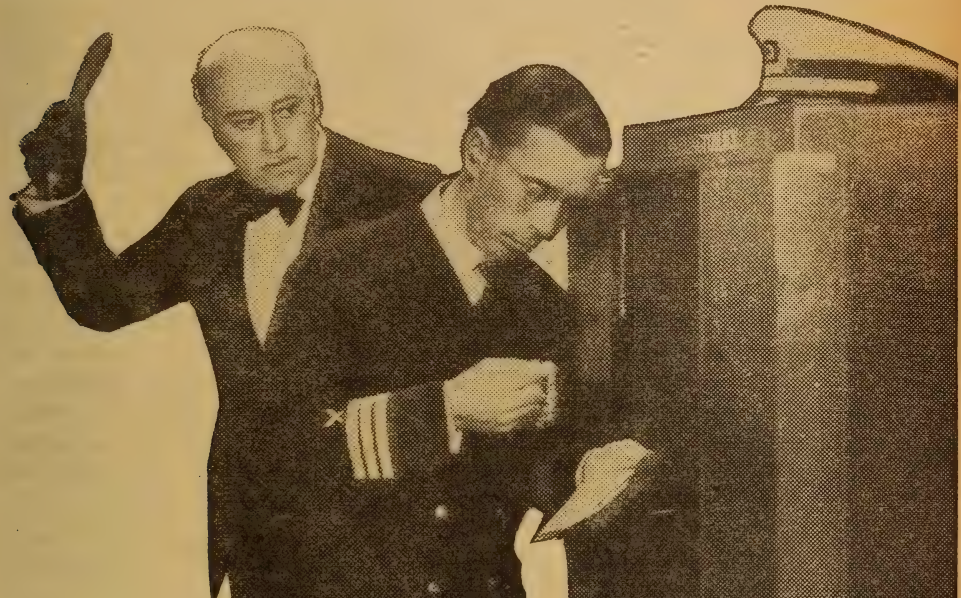
"I've been having the most thrilling time!" Evelyn said with seeming enthusiasm. "Mr. Brooks has been showing me all over the boat!"

"I never met any one who was so enthusiastic," Brooks exclaimed eagerly. "But you haven't had a real thrill until you've seen the engine room."

"Yes, but——" Evelyn began, but Brooks interrupted.

"I'll fix it with the chief engineer and be right back." The purser dashed away and Evelyn dropped wearily into the chair beside the professor.

"I see you are making quite a bit of



While Brooks worked the combination, the professor entered noiselessly through the partly opened door.

"Those two men tried twice to get

progress with that handsome young man," he said dryly.

"I'm so sick of looking over the ship with that walking encyclopedia, I could scream!" Evelyn said through her teeth. "My feet are killing me! I've been to the bridge, the wireless room, the galley—everywhere but the crow's nest. And now—the engine room!"

"It's all in a day's work, my dear!" the professor told her, low-voiced. "And perhaps you can get better acquainted with that young engineer. He might prove useful."

Brooks came hurrying back in the company of Petroff, and the professor's look became once more scholastic and benevolent instead of shrewd and calculating.

"Is it all fixed?" Evelyn exclaimed brightly. "I'm sure it's going to be most exciting."

"What is?" inquired Petroff's genial voice. "May I go along?"

Evelyn welcomed him eagerly, and they all went off to the engine room together.

The girl looked about in genuine wonder at the gleaming drive shafts, the pow-

the ruby. Now they try again!"

erfully revolving wheels, the myriad gauges with their anxious needles. Then, her eye caught by the roar and flare of fire, she glanced down through the grating on which they stood, into the stokehole beneath.

Their backs and faces grimy but glistening, the stokers bent rhythmically to the open furnace doors, to the coal heaps, to the furnaces again.

Evelyn's face lighted as she spotted Duke's face among those below. Glancing up, Duke caught her smile, and fell to shoveling vigorously.

"MORE coal, Grimy!" Duke shouted above the din of the motors, the roar of the flames, and the clatter of coal shovels. "Grimy," his pal, who sat mooning on a wheelbarrow, sprang into action.

As Duke straightened up for a minute he glanced sharply at the man stoking next to him. "Malay Mike" was a slight little man, and only yesterday Duke had sent him to sick bay for rest. Shorthanded, the big Swede foreman, "Ox," had put him back at work. He was staggering now, his hands to his head.

Duke put out a hand to steady him,

but Mike pushed him away dazedly and threw down his shovel.

"Get him some water!" Duke yelled to Grimy, all thought of showing off for the girl forgotten. He did not notice that she was now on the floor of the stokehole with Petroff and the purser.

"Come on, Mike," Duke urged. "Get a hold on yourself."

"Yeah," Ox snarled, "pick up that shovel, you welsher!"

As Mike stumbled toward the coal pile, Ox pushed him, and Mike wheeled on him crazily, shovel upraised.

"You!" he screamed. "*You* make the fires in my head!"

Ox lunged at him. Mike brought the shovel down on the big man's head with a force that floored him, and leaped away from Duke's restraining hands.

"Keep away from me!" he yelled, swinging his shovel wildly at the other stokers, who had gathered round in an effort to subdue him. His bloodshot eyes searched fearfully for a way of escape, and he sprang for the stairs.

Evelyn and Petroff cowered to one side, petrified with alarm at the sudden turn of events.

Shouting, the stokers closed in on Mike, and the little man retreated to the bulkhead, his shovel swinging in a vicious semicircle.

Sobbing with fear and with the pain of the fires in his head, he glanced around. He was trapped!

With desperate, crazy yells, he turned and started beating with his shovel on the coupling of the steam line that led from the boilers to the engine room above.

Suddenly the place was filled with the deadly hiss of live steam, rushing clouds of blinding, scalding vapor!

Mike, closest to the heat, crumpled in an exhausted heap. The other stokers, knowing from experience that the floor was the safest place, dropped swiftly on their faces. But Evelyn and Petroff stood stock-still in the path of the steam!

DUKE gathered himself. The single instant had made the stokehole an inferno where it was next to impossible to see or breathe.

He peered through the gray curtain to make sure where the two stood. A little way behind them was a recess in the wall.

"Shut off that steam, somebody!" Duke yelled, and plunged toward the girl and Petroff.

There was no time to be gentle. With all the force of his rush behind the blow, Duke hit Petroff on the shoulder, tumbling him backward onto the floor. With a swift movement he scooped Evelyn up in his arms and stumbled with her toward the recess where he had thrown Petroff. Gasping, he stood there with his back to the stokehole, keeping his body between the girl and the direct rush of the steam.

He glanced around over his shoulder. They'd all be steamed alive like a bunch of lobsters if somebody didn't get to that shut-off valve pretty soon.

Through the shifting clouds he could see that Grimy had wrapped a burlap bag around his head and was attempting to reach the bulkhead. MacWhinney was yelling some command, but the rest of them were flat on their faces. Duke muttered savagely as the deadly heat drove Grimy back, burned and collapsing.

He pushed the girl down into the corner with Petroff.

"Stay here!" he yelled, and lowered his head for the plunge back into the steam.

Halfway across the stokehole he stumbled over Grimy's wheelbarrow. As if it were a toy, he snatched it up and held it before him for a shield as he staggered, panting desperately for breath, toward the hissing outlet! With one scalded hand, he thrust the wheelbarrow against the broken coupling; with the other he fumbled for the valve, found and turned it!

The deadly hissing sound died, and

through the choking clouds, Duke staggered back to where Grimy lay on the floor. He tried to lift him up, then crumpled to one knee, gasping and exhausted.

Dimly he heard MacWhinney shout:

"Get these men to the sick bay!" And Petroff's protest:

"Sick bay! What are you talking about? These men are heroes! Nothing on this ship is too good for them!"

WHEN Duke and Grimy came fully to themselves next day, bandaged within an inch of their lives and elegantly established in the bridal suite, they decided that the life of a hero was worth the sacrifice necessary to secure it. They basked in the admiring attention they received, particularly that of Evelyn Howard. She was sweetly proprietary and much concerned. She brought flowers and gifts—a cigarette lighter and a book of poetry for Duke; a box of candy for Grimy and his pet monkey, Jenny. Duke didn't know quite what to do with the poetry, but the lighter delighted him.

To cap the climax, Petroff came smiling in to announce that he had persuaded the captain to give Duke back his third engineer's stripe, and Duke beamed happily, convinced once more that the world was a great place and Duke Donovan a great fellow.

Late that night, Evelyn Howard stood at the rail with Brooks, the purser trying to cover her boredom with his steadily continuing lecture on the stars and their relation to navigation. As he talked, her fingers toyed with the clasp of her bracelet, loosening it.

"Oh, dear!" she exclaimed as it dropped to the deck. "There it goes again!" She looked up at him with a little worried frown. "The clasp must be loose. My mind would be much easier if it was back in the ship's safe," she said. "Would it be asking too much for you to put it there?"

He hesitated a moment—it was very late. Then he yielded to the appeal in her glance, and they went together toward the dimly lit purser's office.

As he turned the knob to the safe, Evelyn stood near the doorway. Swiftly she nodded to some one outside, and while Brooks talked, working over the combination, the professor entered noiselessly through the partly opened door. He and Evelyn glanced at each other, and he moved silently toward Brooks.

"You can't be too careful of a bracelet like this, Miss Howard," the young man was saying solemnly, swinging open the safe door. "It's a beautiful specimen of the jeweler's——"

There was a small thud, Brooks grunted, and Evelyn's lips curled scornfully as he crumpled to the floor.

HALF an hour later, a wandering drunk in bemused search of the purser, stumbled over the bound body of Evelyn Howard on the floor of the purser's office. His mouth dropped open and he gazed around wildly. As he brought his eyes to focus on the open safe door and then on the body of the purser, also bound and gagged, he shrieked hoarsely and fled into the corridor, making a racket that brought the ship's captain, Petroff, Duke and Grimy quickly to the scene.

The safe had been thoroughly rifled, but only the Mahal Ruby was missing—that and Evelyn Howard's bracelet!

Petroff grew livid. Then his eyes bulged as he caught sight of two familiar faces in the group outside the office—the men who had held him up in Havana!

"Captain!" he shouted excitedly. "It's as simple as X Y Z! These two men tried twice to get the ruby. Now they try again!" Rapidly he explained to the captain, and the two thugs, protesting their innocence, were taken along to the captain's office for the inquiry.

"Now, Miss Howard——" the captain said.

"It all happened so quickly," she faltered helplessly. "One of the men seized me while the other struck down Mr. Brooks and snatched my bracelet. Then they rifled the safe."

The captain gestured to Petroff's two suspects. "Can you identify these men?" he asked.

"I was so terrified," she said uncertainly, "and the light was so dim——" She swayed unsteadily, and Duke caught her in his arms.

"This excitement has been too much," the professor said anxiously. "I must ask you to excuse my daughter, captain."

"Certainly," the captain granted, and Duke started down the corridor with the girl in his arms.

"YOU'VE been very kind, Mr. Donovan," Evelyn said gratefully when Duke had deposited her in her stateroom. The professor adjusted some pillows for her.

"Don't mention it," he said. "Is there anything else I can do for you?"

"I should like a cigarette," she said, and he gave her one from a crumpled pack. When he offered the lighter she had given him, she took it from him and held it in her own hand.

"You know, I think your monogram would look rather nice on here," she suggested. Then she swayed dizzily, her hand to her head. "Oh!" she murmured. "Some water, please."

Duke went quickly into the adjoining room, and Evelyn sat up, her dizziness gone like magic.

"Give it to me!" she ordered sharply, and the professor put into her hand the fabulous drop of shimmering red called the Mahal Ruby. Quickly Evelyn unscrewed the cap of the lighter, and stuffed the ruby down among the coils of packing. Duke's footsteps returned, and the professor bent over the girl solicitously while she hastily put the lighter back together again.

"Thank you," she smiled sweetly as he handed her the water. He grinned back, and turned to go. "Mr. Donovan, your lighter," she reminded him.

"Yeah," he murmured, taking it. "Wouldn't want to be without that."

"Good night, and thank you," the professor said, and turned to Evelyn with a smile as he closed the door after Duke.

"Very clever, my dear," he commended her, and she gave a big sigh of relief.

"Now we have nothing to fear so far as the customs is concerned," she said.

He pulled from an inside pocket Evelyn's bracelet. "Remember, my dear, you lost this in the late robbery," the professor reminded her, and flung the bracelet through the open porthole.

"There goes five thousand dollars," she murmured regretfully.

"A good gamble," he said. "Five against a hundred. Good night, and pleasant dreams!"

AMID the bustle of landing, late next afternoon, Grimy sat and watched enviously while Duke dressed, with extreme care, to go ashore.

"Gee, you get all the breaks," he marveled, fingering the engraved card that bore Evelyn Howard's name and a Westchester address. "That gal must be strong for you, givin' you presents and invitin' you up to her house, and everything."

Duke knotted his tie with elaborate care. "It's strictly business," he protested insincerely. "The captain's gonna be there, and some company officials and——"

Abruptly he let out a howl of rage. Grimy's monkey, Jenny, had become curious about the lighter, lying with Duke's other things on the table, and had it thoroughly apart.

Placatingly, Grimy put it back together again and handed it to Duke, now ready to go ashore. "Here it is, good as new," he soothed, and watched wistfully while his friend swaggered out.

Duke had hardly had time to get off the pier when Grimy burst out the door of their room and pelted up the stairs to the captain's quarters.

The captain, Petroff and a police captain stared in surprise as Grimy bolted in without knocking.

"Captain——" he started breathlessly, then thrust out his big paw and opened it, palm up. Petroff gasped and hastily picked the Mahal Ruby out of Grimy's trembling hand.

"Where did you get it?" he demanded.

"I f-found it on the f-floor of our room," Grimy stuttered. "I don't know how it got there—and I'm sure Duke don't know anything about it——"

Petroff sniffed curiously, then lifted the ruby to his nostrils. "Smells like gasoline," he said, and looked at Grimy questioningly.

A gleam of light touched his excited face. "Jenny had Duke's lighter all apart," he said. "Maybe——"

As fast as he could make the words come out, he told them about the lighter Evelyn Howard had given Duke, how Jenny took it apart, how Duke was going to the Howard's for dinner. "With you, captain," Grimy finished, and the captain shook his head.

"That's the first I ever heard of it," he said.

Petroff gave an excited exclamation. "She was using him for a cover up so he would take the ruby through customs for her! That's why she gave him the lighter. When he turns up there to-night without the ruby, he's going to be in plenty of trouble!"

He whirled on the police captain. "Come on, let's go!" he said, then turned to Grimy. "Do you know where she lives?"

Grimy frowned. "Something to do with sea food," he muttered, "and the compass."

IN the Howard house on Pearl Drive in Westchester there was an air of tense waiting.

"If you ask me," said a big man who looked not at all like a butler in spite of the livery he wore, "it was a risky piece of business to let that ruby out of your hands."

"Nobody asked you, Slug," Evelyn said shortly.

"Mr. Donovan *is* late," the professor reminded her uneasily.

"Well," said "Slug" threateningly, "if this is a set-up——"

The doorbell pealed sharply, and Evelyn rose hastily. "Get in the other room," she ordered two tough-looking gentlemen with strangely bulging pockets. "Let him in, Slug. And try to act like a butler."

Slug snarled and went to the door, to let in a broadly smiling Duke.

"Mr. Donovan?" Slug inquired politely. "You are expected, sir."

Beaming, Duke greeted Evelyn when she came in, and handed her the bunch of flowers that he awkwardly carried.

"Guess I'm early, huh?" He looked around. "Nobody here yet."

"Perhaps they're having difficulty finding the place," Evelyn suggested. "Have a cigarette?"

He took one and held up his lighter.

"Oh, about that monogram," she said, and took it from him.

The butler entered with cocktails.

"Telephone for you, Miss Howard," he said, and Evelyn excused herself and left the room, the lighter in her hand.

"Have a cocktail, mister?" asked the butler.

Duke nodded. As the big man bent to give him the drink, a perplexed look crossed Duke's face. The bulge of the butler's coat, as he stooped, revealed a gun in a shoulder holster!

Worried and suspicious, Duke glanced toward the door. Evelyn had said these were new servants. Perhaps there was trouble brewing. Maybe some gang was planning to hold up the Howards and their guests! He sipped his cocktail, listening intently.

Presently a murmur of voices from the other room grew louder. Duke edged forward on his chair.

"I don't know where it is!" he heard Evelyn say fearfully. "I don't know!"

Her scream stabbed the air, and Duke's leap took him halfway across the room. Slug, the butler, moved to interfere, but Duke's big, shovel-toughened fist lifted him crashing across a table five feet away! Hardly pausing, Duke scooped up the gun Slug had dropped and plunged through the door.

"STICK 'em up!" he bellowed, and the two toughs who had Evelyn by the arms reached hastily for the ceiling. The professor followed suit.

"Not you, professor," Duke said gently, and stepped protectingly to Evelyn's side. "Don't worry, Miss Howard," he assured her. "I'll handle 'em." He started backing away, drawing Evelyn with him.

"You guys get back there and keep your hands up," he told the men. "Professor, call the police."

Obediently, the professor dialed—with his hand on the cradle of the phone! "Hello!" he shouted to the dead line. "Hello, police department——"

As Duke, backing, reached his side, the professor brought the telephone down with terrific force on Duke's right arm. The gun flew from his hand and the two against the wall were on him before he could move.

Evelyn snatched up the gun and faced him furiously. "You idiot!" she cried. "What did you do with that ruby?"

Duke stared at her in bewilderment. "Ruby——"

She held out the dismantled lighter. "Yes," she said impatiently. "It was in this lighter. I put it there myself."

Duke gazed around at the snarling, vindictive faces. His black eyes snapped with anger. Nobody yet had ever made Duke Donovan the "patsy" without regretting it!

"I get it," he said slowly, putting things together in his mind. "You've been makin' a sucker out of me."

"What do you suppose I was playing you for?" Evelyn sneered. "Where is it?"

Duke grinned, though his face was red. "Sister, that's your headache," he told her. "If I knew, I wouldn't tell you."

The professor stepped closer. "Is that so?" he snarled. "Maybe we can find a way to make you talk!" He nodded to one of the men, and the fellow slugged Duke viciously in the stomach.

Duke's grin froze as he staggered back against the wall, but he laughed to himself as his eyes searched rapidly. If these babies thought they were going to have a picnic with an old barroom brawler like Duke Donovan——

He saw the other man's fist headed for his chin as he reached the light switch and ducked. He heard the man howl as his fist hit the rough plaster wall, and in the dark Duke dived for whatever legs he could grab.

DOWN Pearl Road sped the police car bearing Grimy, Petroff, and the others. To recall the name of the street was as much as Grimy had been able to manage. They were cruising for the number.

Suddenly Grimy yelled: "Stop!" and the driver brought the car to a sudden halt.

From a house off the road came unmistakable sounds of combat. A chair came hurtling through a ground-floor window, and Grimy yelled excitedly:

"That's the house!"

They tore up the driveway. As they approached the door, the body of a man came through the window, doubled up as if hurled from within by a mighty hand. Before the broken glass had stopped tinkling, Duke Donovan rocketed after him, feet first and with fists flashing. Grimy howled with delight and piled on, while Petroff and the policemen hurried through the door.

When the lights were turned on they

revealed the results of Duke's years of training in the ports of the world. Under the one table left standing in the room lay the unconscious professor. Evelyn cowered in a corner, and in the middle of the floor, Slug was having the stuffing pounded out of him by his bewildered confederate.

"Well, my friends," Petroff said jovially as the policemen dragged the professor to his feet and pulled Evelyn from the corner. "I must admit that this is the first time in my life I couldn't read human nature in a flash." He shook his head. "Now, Mr. Professor, you will have plenty of time to finish your encyclopedia—and your lady friend can help you."

He chuckled and looked around for Duke.

Having polished off the man they were working on, Grimy sat back and took a look at Duke Donovan. He snorted. The upper quarter of Duke's face was of an extreme puffiness, colored deep purple, with effective traceries of green and yellow.

"Some shiner!" said Grimy. "That's what you get for mixin' with class."

Duke grinned. "From now on a good fight is all the class I want," he said. "Come on, let's go find a drink!"

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THOROUGHBREDS ALL

There are all kinds of thoroughbreds—— only Cyrus Benton didn't know it.

"KILL that cur! He's lamed 'Sir Patches' for life. Kill him!"

The voice of Cyrus Benton roared from the stable door with diabolical fury. Inside the stable, one of his fine race horses, Sir Patches, was plunging and rearing wildly, while two men who had been trying to bandage a bowed tendon, were holding the halter frantically.

Out in the stable yard, the pup, a little furry ball of a mongrel, was scooting across the ground, heart fluttering with fear.

The trouble had all started with a cat —at least, the immediate trouble for the pup. A moment before, he had spied the cat and had taken after it with merry yelps.

The cat happened to be the gardener's pet and he had hurled a hoe at the pup, missing him by inches. The dog had dashed into the stable under the legs of Sir Patches just as the men were putting the bandage on the horse's leg. The horse had been frightened at this sudden appearance of the pup and had gone into a kicking spree.

BENTON, vigorous and with the typical temper of a sporting aristocrat, had gone into a rage of uncontrolled anger. Even John Woods, the young trainer, and the only real friend the pup had on the ranch, lost his temper.

At Benton's words, John rushed out of the stable, grabbing a stick as he ran. The pup turned, saw him and stopped, expecting a gesture of friendship from the man who always played with him and fed him. But the stick left John's hand, whirling through the air at the pup, who gave one startled look and dove for a hole under a barn building.

A stable boy came charging out of the stable with a pitchfork. He ran over to the building where the pup had disappeared and started poking in the hole with the pitchfork. At the sight of this, John's anger against the pup turned suddenly to the stable boy.

Wresting the pitchfork from him, John cried: "Lay off that pup! I'll handle him! Here, Boy," he pleaded with the hidden pup. "Come on out. I'm awfully sorry——"

THE CAST

JOHN WOODS	John Arledge
Moroni Olsen	Cyrus Benton
Louise Latimer	Gloria Benton
Emmet Vogan	Mason

and

Warrior and Boy

Story by Tom Storey and Earl Johnson.

Screenplay by Frank Howard Clark and Jack Pettit.

Directed by Glenn Tryon.

Produced by Robert Sisk.

RKO Radio PICTURES

A fictionization of the RKO Radio picture of the same title.

But the pup remained under the barn, too frightened to come out.

"All right, Boy," John said. "I got mad a minute ago. Now it's your turn, come and see me when you get over your mad spell. 'Bye, now."

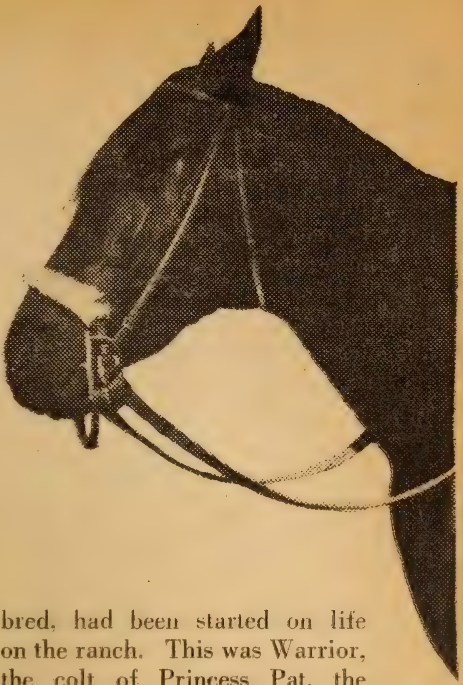
John walked back to the stable where the attendants had quieted Sir Patches, but the pup remained under the barn, waiting until he believed it safe to venture out.

THIS unpleasant episode was only one of a long series that had marked the six months of his life. His mother was one of Cyrus Benton's pedigreed shepherd dogs, but his father was suspected to be a wolf on the range.

Benton had ordered all the pups in the litter killed and the mother, his prize dog, sent to the sheep ranch. As this order was given, Boy had wandered away from the mother for his first excursion into the world. All he knew was that his mother and his brothers and sisters were gone when he crawled back into the kennel.

On the day that Boy had been born, another animal, a full-blooded thoroughbred, had been started on life on the ranch. This was Warrior, the colt of Princess Pat, the aristocrat of all of Benton's fine horses. Grenadier was the colt's father, and on both sides he was a thoroughbred whose entrance into the world created a furor of interest on the ranch.

MA—5



The pup and Warrior had met on the third day of their lives. Boy, on the excursion into the world which had saved his life, had wandered into the stall where Warrior, a wabbly colt, stood weakly on spindley legs, bewildered and dazed by all the excitement he had caused.

Boy looked at the colt, wondering what kind of creature he was. The colt returned the look, and in that instant sprang a strong friendship between the two.

SOMEHOW the pup managed to live through the first months of his life. John Woods, the young trainer, fed him milk. Benton himself cursed at the sight of the mongrel pup and wanted him killed, but John pleaded for his life and saw to it that Benton saw little of the pup.

As soon as Warrior was able to run, he started to play with the pup. Their game was simple and exciting. Boy would run like a streak, his little ears flopping back, until he got far ahead of the colt, and then Warrior would race after him, overcoming the handicap like a streak of lightning.

But Warrior was a thoroughbred—and the pup was a mongrel. Boy was never allowed to forget this. His life, except with Warrior and John, was not pleasant or kind.

Cyrus Benton looked on all things with utter disdain if they were not thoroughbreds, whether man or beast. This feeling was experienced by all his help, with the exception of John Woods, and the pup was treated like all mongrels were treated on the ranch.

LYING in the darkness of the hole under the barn, the pup shivered from fright. Even John, his friend, had turned against him—had hurled a stick at him!

This betrayal shot through the pup's heart like a sharp knife. It was night before he ventured from the hole. He half expected to find John waiting for him, to take him up and play with him. That would have eased his fear and stopped the frightened shivering of his little body, but John did not appear.

The pup did not know that John had come out into the barnyard several times, calling for him, and that he had been forced to go to town a few minutes before the pup ventured forth. The pup only knew that his one friend was not there.

So he sneaked across the yard to the stable, where his other friend, Warrior, was in his expensive stall. Boy sniffed at the closed door and whined. From inside came the soft whinny of Warrior, but in the next minute, the gruff voice of Davis, the stable hand that had gone for the pup with a pitchfork, yelled:

"Get away from that door, you mongrel!"

The next thing the pup knew, a grain-bucket was hurled at him. It missed him by inches and crashed against the side of the barn.

With a yelp of fear, the pup ran from the barn, stopping at the edge of the corral. From somewhere out on the range came the long, mournful wail of a wolf. It died away in the night weirdly. The pup cocked his ear and looked out toward the range, feeling a thrill he could not understand.

AGAIN came the wail of the wolf. The pup rested his paws on the lower rail of the corral fence and listened, fascinated by some new instinct. Suddenly from the bunk house came the sound of laughter and music.

The pup took one last look at the night whence the howl of the wolf had come, and turned and trotted over to the bunk house. The music and the laughter of the men was something he knew and understood. It brought back Boy's memories of John.

He listened to the music for a while and then went to John's house to crawl in the door always left open for him. But the door was closed. The pup scratched against it frantically and forlornly whined.

This was something that had never happened before. This, and the stick John had hurled at him. The whole world seemed upside down to him. Again he heard the mournful wail of the wolf. The pup saw Cyrus Benton come out of the ranch house with a rifle in his hand.

Benton walked to the corral fence and saw the indistinct outline of the howling wolf. The gun came up, roared. The wolf ceased his mournful howl.

The explosion of the gun in the hand of the man who hated him sent terror into the heart of the pup. He looked at the closed door that John had always left open for him. He remembered the stick that had been hurled at him.

Then he turned, slinking away in the darkness, running madly past the corral and out into the night.

Back in his stall, guarded closely, Warrior whined and pawed the straw at his feet nervously, as if through some strange way he knew that the pup was racing out into the night away from him forever.

MORNING broke in a haze of misty gray. The pup was in a strange country. He was cold, hungry, and weary. He had hardly stopped running since leaving the ranch.

Now he was in the woods. Great birds flapped their wings over him. They scared him. He had never seen birds that could fly. The chickens at the ranch had always walked.

Strange sounds were around him, now —sounds he had never heard before. Somewhere to his right a wild cat screamed. The pup leaped under a log in terror.

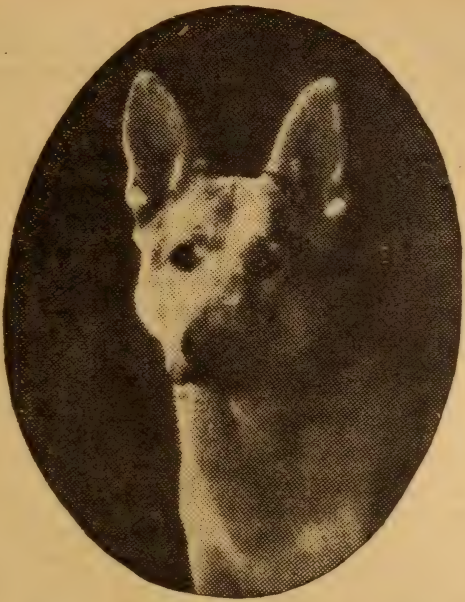
He ventured out from the log cautiously, his eyes trying to take in everything at once. He went down a narrow lane. The wild cat was crouched under a tree. A mere cat did not frighten him. At the ranch he chased the cat all over the barnyard!

With a good-natured bark, he dashed at the beast, but the cat hunched his back, spit at the pup and then rushed him. The pup turned and ran, his tail between his legs, darting under a log just as the wild cat sent out a vicious paw to tear him apart.

What happened next was pretty much of a terrifying nightmare to the pup. He couldn't stay under the log forever. He was hungry and thirsty. Hours later, he crawled out and sneaked to a river. He saw a bear cuff a fish. There had been a pet bear at home and the pup had played with it. So he ran up to this bear, intending to share his fish.

The bear was stunned for a moment by such bland effrontry; then he growled and Boy scampered away. He left the river, dazed and unable to understand why all animals were suddenly so unfriendly. Then he came into a valley and he felt the strange thrill that had come over him when he heard the mournful wail of the wolf the night before.

He saw a herd of wild horses fleeing in mortal terror before a howling pack of wolves!



Boy . . . the body of a wolf and the fur of his pedigreed mother.

BOY looked at the wolves with the feeling that he had found new friends. He saw the pack bring down a colt and hungrily devour the flesh. The pup licked his chops and ran happily after the pack.

The leader, a tall, bony beast, overseeing the eating of the colt, saw the pup, growled menacingly and rushed him. Boy never knew exactly what happened. In that split second he never had a chance to realize that death was upon him!

He was thrown into the air, the teeth of the leader biting his flesh. He slipped out of the wolf's mouth and fell to the ground. Too frightened to yelp, he squirmed away. A fight in the pack, diverted the leader's attention for a moment and in that moment, the pup, getting strength back, was racing through the grass for the safety of the river.

He got there safely, body racked with pain and mind stunned by what had happened. He found the remains of the fish the bear had been eating. He picked it up in his teeth and ran frantically for the great cliff bordering the river. He was famished. He was willing to risk anything for food.

Far up the cliff he found a cave. This gave him a feeling of safety. He bolted the remains of the fish, licked his chops contentedly and looked around, surveying his new home.

SUMMER passed and autumn came, with the falling of the leaves and the pleasant chill of sunny days. Winter followed with banks of snow and raging blizzards, and when this passed, spring with its garlands of flowers and melodies of colors.

A second winter came and passed, and Boy, now full-grown, stood in the opening of the cave. He was tall and bony, a beautiful beast, with the body of a wolf and the colored fur of his pedigreed shepherd mother.

In those two years, his fame had spread over many valleys. The trappers called him "Lightning" and feared him. The Cattle Men's Association had a reward on his head of five hundred dollars. Many had tried to collect this reward, but the trappers shook their heads and said that Lightning was immune to death.

Powerful and deadly, Lightning struck right and left, disappearing before any one knew he was around. He had not changed his home. His cave was now filled with the bones of the victims brought there to be eaten.

In the time that had passed, he had run into the wolf pack and had taken a mate. At the same time, he had met the wolf leader that had thrown him in the air that eventful day when he first wandered forth into the valley.

The meeting with the leader had been over in a few minutes. Lightning, powerful, and goaded on by the fury of hatred, hurled the leader into the air, tore his throat and flanks. The wolf had fled through the grass in fear, just as Lightning had done as a pup.

Lightning had never returned to the ranch. The memory of Warrior remained a vague and far-away thing, a gnawing loneliness that he could not fight off.

The tenderness of John Woods was another thing he could not forget. There were times when he went on some high knoll and howled mournfully, not at the night or for a mate but for those two back at the ranch whom he had loved as a pup.

AT the ranch, Warrior had grown into a beautiful two-year-old, the pride of Cyrus Benton and every one at the ranch. All other horses were overlooked. It was Warrior who was to bring fame to the sporting reputation of Benton.

The care of Warrior was given wholly to John Woods who treated the colt as he would a child, breaking him to ride and training him in every known art of the race track.

One day a car drove up to the ranch. In it was George Mason, a race-track man who knew bets as well as horses—and who wasn't averse to making horses win bets for him, resorting to any means necessary. With him was his shadow, a shifty-faced individual named Crane.

Mason had come to the ranch to look at Bobolink, one of Benton's better known horses. Warrior had not yet been put on the tracks. But when Crane went to witness Bobolink run, he got his first sight of Warrior.

IT was a dramatic, bewildering sight. Old Eph was leading Warrior. Bobolink was saddled and ridden by a jockey. The jockey started Babolink on a trial heat. Warrior seeing the horse start, broke away from Eph and started for the track.

Bobolink was twenty yards ahead of Warrior when the riderless colt reached the track. With a long stride that held the spectators breathless, Warrior took after Bobolink, gaining with every stride. And then to the amazement of the small crowd, the colt caught up with the horse and passed it on the home stretch.

"What horse is that?" Crane fairly shouted.

"A *race* horse," John answered.

"I bred him myself, by Grenadier out of Princess Pat." Benton added proudly.

"I've got to have him," Crane said. "I'll give you ten grand."

"Ten grand?" Benton repeated. "Why, man, Warrior is a colt—never been ridden!"

"I'll make it fifteen grand," Crane said with feverish excitement. "I'll make it twenty grand!"

"A man who would pay twenty thousand for an unbroken colt is crazy," Benton said, shaking his head. "And the man that would refuse such an offer is crazier still."

"Then it's a deal?" Crane said eagerly.

"No!" Benton fairly shouted. "He's not for sale at any price!"

"I NEVER saw you give up so easy, boss," Crane said when he was alone with Mason, later.

"Did you *ever* see me give up?" Mason shot back. "There are ways and ways to get what you want. I am going to get what I want to-night. We'll go back to town for a couple men."

Night settled over the Benton ranch

He whined nervously, but made no move.

in a haze of misty gray. From the house came no lights. In the barn, old Eph, the watchman, slept. It was nearing three in the morning.

Shadows moved in the darkness outside the barn. Stealthily and swiftly they darted for the door. The door was open. Two of the shadows entered through it. Old Eph continued to sleep. Out of the darkness behind him a man crept. A cloth soaked in chloroform was thrown over the old watchman's face. He groaned and struggled, but his struggles quickly died out. He slumped to the floor unconscious.

The men that had entered the barn worked quickly, although they knew the chloroform would keep the watchman out for half an hour. They threw a cloth over Warrior's head and led him out of the barn to a truck waiting at the road.

IT was a good half hour later when the dazed Eph raised the alarm which brought the ranch to life with wild scurrying and shouting. But this shouting and scurrying did not bring Warrior back. In a trailer truck, he was being hurried to a remote and isolated canyon twenty miles away.

In a shack in this canyon, Crane, Mason's henchman, was working with buckets of paint.

"Make Warrior a roan," Mason instructed him. "We can keep him that way until after the races. Then——"

The sound of the truck broke in on their conversation. Crane went out to the pole corral where Warrior was being unloaded.

Twenty minutes later, he staggered back into the shack, body bruised and face covered with blood.

"Nobody is ever going to paint *that* horse!" Crane groaned. "He's an outlaw if there ever was one! Like to killed me!"

Benton jumped to his feet.

"Where is he now?" he demanded.

"The last I saw of him, he was racing over the canyon rim," Crane answered. "He broke the corral fence——"

"Come on!" Benton cried. "We're going after him!"

AS they searched the canyon in the early dawn, so intent were they that they did not see on the far rim two riders. It was John Woods and Andy, another of the handlers on Cyrus Benton's horse ranch.

"This is the only way Warrior could have gone," John said. "It's the only part of the country to hide anything."

"Look!" Andy cried. "There's a shack down in that canyon."

The two men rode down to the shack, so recently deserted by Mason and his crew. There were tire marks in the dirt. The corral fence was broken. John, however, paid no attention to these. He was running to the side of the corral where an object lay on the ground.

"Warrior's halter!" he cried. "He's been here!"

"And judging from the fence, he's gone," Andy said bitterly.

"We'll find him," John gritted. "We've got his tracks to follow, now!"

BUT Warrior was far away by this time. Motionless on a narrow ridge many miles from the shack in the canyon, he gazed on a herd of wild horses grazing below, led by a great stallion.

Warrior whinnied loudly. The mares with the stallion looked up, saw Warrior outlined against the sky like a statue in bronze. The stallion stopped grazing, turned to look at the intruder. Then he moved to his place at the head of the herd.

Warrior trotted down toward the herd. The stallion glared at him with open hostility while the mares showed their approval of the newcomer.

In a fury of rage, the stallion charged Warrior. Warrior reared back, brought his front hoofs up and beat the great stallion down with an avalanche of crushing blows.

In a flash the stallion was up, charging into the fight with all the cunning of a wild horse. Warrior retreated under the fury of his attack.

He brought his hoofs up again. Down they came, catching the stallion on the neck! The stallion took the blow with a wild scream and pushed Warrior back.

The fight took both up a hill to a cliff, the stallion fighting with the fury of a wild beast and Warrior, recovering his strength, fighting with the cool courage of a thoroughbred. He waited for another chance to bring his hoofs down on the stallion.

It came when they were both near a precipice. Warrior reared back, his hoofs high, and pounced down with deadly fury. The stallion tottered on the brink of the cliff for a moment—then slipped, screaming, to his death fifty feet below.

Warrior looked at the crumpled heap far below, and then trotted back to the herd and took his place at their head.

WHILE Warrior was leading his pack of wild horses, John was riding alone in a valley some distance away. His face was haggard and his eyes red-rimmed from lack of sleep. He had lost Warrior's trail, had searched for him night and day but he had found no trace of him.

Two trappers came down the narrow trail. One had his face swathed in bandages.

"Seen any horses around here?" John asked.

"We ain't seen anything but Lightning," one of the trappers replied. "Take a squint at my partner. He had a run-in with him."

"Who's Lightning?"

"The biggest, meanest, killingest wolf living!" the trapper answered. "Better look out for him. We ain't seen no horses, but a herd of wild ones over the Mashed Cat Meadows."

"Was there a big bay stallion with them?" John's voice betrayed his sudden interest.

"Seems to me there was," the trapper replied. "Big and powerful—not yet a three-year-old."

"Maybe that's the one I'm looking for," John said.

Warrior reared up to greet Boy.

"Mebbe so. But look out for that critter, Lightning!" the trapper warned.

A WOLF pack moved noiselessly through the brook close to Mashed Cat Meadows. The pack was tired and hungry. They stopped and lay down, panting from exhaustion. But their leader did not lie down—his job was to be on the lookout for food.

A day had passed since the pack had made a kill. The gnawing terror of hunger was gripping them. Lightning, their leader, the terror of the wild, crept to the peak of a hill to have a look at the country. He sniffed and stopped suddenly.

He looked down into Mashed Cat Meadows. What he saw caused every nerve in his body to tingle and the hunger at his stomach to cry out for food.

The herd of wild horses, led by Warrior, were grazing below him. Lightning forgot about his hungry pack. He slid down the hill, his belly scraping the earth.

Warrior, grazing leisurely, looked up quickly and gave a warning snort. The other horses raised their heads. Then, a moment later, they were grazing again, oblivious of their danger.

Lightning came to a precipice. He crouched for a spring, directly over Warrior. His muscles tightened under him. A swift spring at the throat of Warrior and it would all be over before the stallion could hope to throw the wolf over!

HIS muscles bunched as he started the spring. As he did, Warrior saw him. He gave a shrill whistle of defiance and reared up, waiting for the attack.

The mares and colts, sensing the danger, fled from the scene. Warrior stayed, too proud to give ground to any foe. Lightning changed tactics. He came down a narrow trail along the face of the cliff. Closer and closer to Warrior his lean, powerful body came.

Still Warrior did not retreat. He stood steadily, never betraying his knowledge that the body coming for him was a foe he could not hope to defeat. One successful lunge at his throat, and the wolf's teeth would be ripping into his jugular vein!

Warrior snorted, pawed the ground, and then reared up, hoofs high, ready for battle. Relentless and deadly, Lightning moved closer, waiting for the right distance to make the murderous lunge. The hoofs of the horse did not worry him. He could move with greater speed than any horse's hoofs!

LIGHTNING'S legs doubled up under him for the death leap. Then suddenly something happened that no human being, watching the duel of death, could have understood!

Lightning's muscles relaxed. He sniffed the air curiously. He rose to his feet and walked toward Warrior. And Warrior raised his head, gave a soft whinny, and walked up to Lightning!

They looked at each other for a moment and then Lightning wheeled to the right and started to run madly over the grass. Warrior watched him until he got far ahead and then he started to race after him, stretching his long legs with an enthusiasm he had not known for nearly two years. He passed Lightning.

Again and again they played their old game, until both were tired. Then they started off together through the peaceful valley, Lightning following at the side of his old friend, barking happily.

Late that evening, they caught up with the herd of mares and colts. Lightning trotted up to the head of the herd with Warrior and together he and Warrior led the herd to a new grazing ground.

When dawn broke, Lightning was lying near Warrior. His ears went back suddenly as he sniffed the air. He heard the wild scream of a colt that had wandered too far from the herd.

With flashing leaps, Lightning covered

the ground to where the colt was being brought down by Lightning's former pack of wolves. With a snarl of rage, Lightning sprang at the pack, his teeth tearing flanks and throats with a deadly fury!

Warrior came charging into the fight. The pack of wolves retreated, then broke into full, panicky flight, with Lightning chasing them. When he came back, Warrior gave his low whinny, Lightning barked in answer, and the two took their places at the head of the herd again—this time with the consciousness that they could protect the mares and colts against any enemies.

YET close to them at that moment was an enemy that both were helpless against. A friendly enemy, who was out to challenge their leadership of the pack and to take Warrior alive.

It was John. Still doggedly pursuing his quarry, he rode over a sharp incline and suddenly saw a herd of horses, with Warrior at their head! Lightning had raced ahead to search the valley for any wolves that might be lurking in the brush.

At the appearance of John, the herd stopped suddenly and looked at him. In the lead, Warrior, quivering with a new excitement, looked at his friend. The haggard and drawn look left John's face and he grinned broadly.

"Came a long way to see you, Warrior!" he called out in a hoarse voice. "But it's worth it. How are you, lad? What are you doing at the head of those wild horses?"

The sound of John's voice caused Warrior's ears to perk up. The herd started to run, but Warrior stood as if hypnotized as his old master rode nearer. At a cautious distance, John dismounted and started toward Warrior, but the horse backed away.

"All right, old fellow," John laughed. "We'll play a little while—but you're going back with me."

Warrior turned and started to race after the herd. John leaped for his saddle and gave chase, his lasso rope swinging in a wide loop.

BUT as he started to swing for Warrior's head, there was a crack of a rifle behind him! John fell face forward in the saddle, tumbled off the racing horse. He thumped in an inert heap on the ground.

Behind him, in a clump of trees, Mason brought his rifle down.

"I'd murder anything to get that horse!" he muttered grimly to Crane, by his side.

"Why didn't you let him catch that wild beast first?" Crane protested.

"Why don't you use your head?" Mason countered. "The horse and the herd are headed for that blind canyon. Come on!"

Mason and Crane leaped on their horses and raced after the herd. With Warrior leading them now, they rushed through the narrow opening of the blind canyon and charged inside. Mason and Crane came through the opening minutes later. They dismounted and closed the opening with two tremendous boulders which they rolled into place behind them.

"Now we got him!" Mason cried.

"Maybe we got some broken bones," Crane answered ruefully. "I tried to paint that beast—once!"

Mason paid no attention to his words. He rode on into the canyon. The herd had stopped, realizing that they were in a trap. The mares and colts stampeded. Warrior lifted his head and scanned the cliffs around him for a path to freedom.

Mason and Crane closed in on him, lasso ropes swinging. Warrior was back to the canyon wall, rearing and pawing at them. Mason's rope sung through the air and looped over the horse's neck.

But as it did, a brown form came hurtling through the air, crashing against the rope, knocking the grip end from

Mason's hand. In the next second, Lightning whirled with a vicious snarl on Mason, his body hurtling off the ground with a speed almost faster than light!

CRANE'S rifle roared. A bullet clipped Lightning's ear. The force of his leap knocked Mason out of his saddle. Warrior, seeing Lightning, charged the two men. Mason scrambled to his feet, vaulting for his saddle, and his horse turned and raced for the opening of the canyon. Crane beat Mason there. He pushed the boulders out of the way and the two went through the opening on terror-stricken horses.

Warrior led the herd out of the trap they had run into. Lightning trotted along at his side proudly, barking happily.

But the danger that hovered over Warrior was still present when the herd came to a meadow and started to graze. Mason and Crane saw the herd from a ridge.

"Wait until that wolf leaves," Mason said. "I'm getting that horse if it takes me a year!"

"Or until you get killed," Crane added curtly.

Lightning sneaked off in the brush to hunt for food and danger to the herd. Crane and Mason saw him leave. They approached the herd from opposite sides, ropes ready for action.

Slowly they closed in on Warrior. He snorted at a danger he recognized instinctively, but could not understand.

The herd took flight at his signal of alarm. Warrior remained, rearing up on his hind legs and pawing the air.

Then Mason and Crane came at him, riding furiously out of the brush. Their ropes went around his neck and legs. He was pulled to the ground, kicking and helpless.

Mason leaped off his horse, fixed the ropes around Warrior's legs to hobble him. Then he led the magnificent steed to a small canyon where he would stay, hidden, until a truck could come to get him.

BACK where the herd had been grazing, Lightning was sniffing the ground and barking loudly for his friend. He ran wildly over the valley. But the soft whinny of Warrior did not answer him.

An unfamiliar scent came to Lightning. His bark turned into an angry snarl. His body crouched as he moved over the ground, trying to trace the scent. But it was vague and indistinct.

Instinct took Lightning to another valley—the valley where John had been shot several hours before. As Lightning moved through the brush, he stopped and sniffed suspiciously, his lips curling in a snarl.

He had picked up the scent of man! In his animal mind that meant a trace of the men that must have taken Warrior!

He went flat on his belly and crawled through the brush just as John, recovering consciousness, was struggling to get his bearings. His face was covered with blood where the bullet had grazed the bone. His head swam crazily and he was too weak to get off the ground. He fell back on his face.

Lightning saw him and the snarl of hate remained on his lips. He crawled closer, ready to spring at the body if it moved. It did move. John raised himself with his arms and looked around helplessly. His brain was clearing slowly and strength was coming back to him.

The muscles in Lightning's powerful legs bunched for the leap.

His jaws opened for the death grip on the man's throat. Then he leaped; but as he did, John fell back on the ground with a loud groan. Lightning hurtled over his prone body, landing on four feet a little beyond him.

John turned, saw Lightning. He remembered the words of the trapper. He knew he was facing the most dangerous wolf in the country, facing him unarmed and in a weakened condition. As his hand reached out for a stick, he groaned again.

LIGHTNING had flattened himself for another spring. This time he would not miss, but the groan he heard made him pause.

John lay on his side, right hand gripping the club, ready to defend himself as best he could. He looked at Lightning. Surprise came to his face, and then a weak grin of recognition.

"Wolf?" he whispered. "You're only part wolf. The better part of you is shepherd. Come here, Boy—I've missed you ever since you left us."

At the sound of John's voice, Lightning rose to his feet. He whined nervously but he made no move to come to John. John had stumbled to his feet and stood swaying weakly, his right hand still holding the stick.

"Come on, Boy," John pleaded. "I'm sorry I threw that stick at you—you had a right to get mad—but that's over." John looked down at his hand and saw the stick and smiled as he threw it away. "See?" he continued. "How's that, Boy? You'll come now, won't you?"

Lightning looked at the stick and then at John. Then he came slowly toward his friend. John went to his knees and held his hand out to this man-killing wolf—this scourge of the countryside!

Lightning came up to him, and at the first touch of John's hand, he leaped and barked with joy.

"I'm pretty weak, Boy," John said. "You're going to my camp with me now. But you've got to take it slow because I can't do much running."

AT the camp, Gloria, the daughter of Cyrus Benton, was trying to do a job of cleaning up and making the place livable. She had arrived several hours before, unknown to John.

When John, followed by the happy Lightning, entered the shack, Gloria looked at him and then at the dog.

"John!" she cried. "You've been hurt! Where——" She caught her breath, her eyes wide in terror at the sight of the wolf-dog.

"Don't you remember him?" John answered. "It's Boy, the pup that used to play with Warrior. He grew up——"

"He surely did," Gloria answered, relieved. "And in the wrong neighborhood!"

"He's a good boy—from a bad family," John laughed. "But what are you doing here? How about your father? You know he thinks his daughter should only associate with aristocrats—thoroughbreds."

Gloria laughed. "I've associated with you since you were a pup—and what father thinks doesn't make any difference."

Lightning started to growl. He barked sharply, as if he suddenly remembered Warrior. He pulled at John's pants leg.

"I'm afraid of that beast," Gloria said. "Get him out of here."

But John had no chance to do that. Lightning suddenly stopped tugging at his trousers. He darted out of the shack and disappeared in the brush.

AN hour later, he was moving swiftly over a ridge, his nose to the ground, trying to pick up the scent he had lost when he first started to trail the men who had taken Warrior.

Lightning left the ridge and covered a broad expanse behind it. He found nothing. He cut across a valley, and entered a section of rocks and cliffs. Suddenly he gave a wild bark. His nose went up to the wind. He streaked across the rocks for the rim of a canyon, his nose still with the wind.

He went over the edge of the canyon in a sliding leap. Below him, lying on the ground, tangled in the ropes around his legs and neck lay—Warrior!

Lightning was at his side in a flash, tugging at the ropes. Warrior whinnied weakly. Lightning tried to cut the ropes with his teeth. Then he pulled and yanked. But the ropes did not give. Again Lightning lay on his stomach and chewed one of the ropes.

The rope snapped. Lightning chewed another rope. It gave. And with a powerful effort, Warrior was on his feet, ropes hanging from his neck and legs.

Lightning barked eagerly and started for the entrance of the canyon. Warrior looked at him but did not move. Lightning rushed back, biting Warrior's ankles to make him follow.

Then suddenly, Warrior trotted out of the canyon. Lightning raced ahead of him, in the direction of John's shack.

EVENING was falling when he shot into the cabin, barking insanely. Gloria screamed and leaped back, fearfully. Lightning continued his crazy yelling, pulling at John's trousers.

"Quiet, Boy!" John said. "What's the matter?"

"He's trying to kill you!" Gloria screamed. "Kill him! Kill him!"

John shook his head.

"He's trying to tell us something," he answered.

Lightning pulled him along to the door. John stopped and gave a shout of joy.

"Warrior!" he cried. "He brought Warrior back to us!"

Gloria came slowly to the door. Now her fear of the dog was gone. She looked at Warrior, who stood in front of the door, whinnying softly. Gloria's arms were around the horse's neck and she started to cry softly.

"Warrior," she whispered. "Warrior—you've come back! You've——"

"You mean," John corrected, "Warrior was *brought* back to us—by Boy!"

Gloria turned and looked down at Boy. He looked up at her with pleading eyes. Dropping on her knees, Gloria threw her arms around his neck and kissed him.

"Whoever said you aren't a thoroughbred doesn't know what they're talking about!" she cried. "You're a thoroughbred—every inch!"

Boy looked up at John and gave a happy bark.

A MONTH later was the day of the great race. The track was filled with milling thousands. Flags decked the flag poles. Animation and excitement reigned.

At the stable, Benton and Gloria stood admiring Warrior. Boy was there also, held under leash by Andy. John stood at Warrior's side, petting his neck affectionately.

"There isn't a horse in the world that can beat him, Mister Benton," he said.

"Win or lose," Benton answered, "I was never prouder to see my colors on a horse."

But while Benton talked, Mason and Crane were closeted with two men in a building near the track.

"Is everything oke?" Mason asked them.

"Warrior won't have a chance," he was told. "We got Fanton's jockey fixed to throw his horse in front of Warrior and pocket him. Then——" It took some time for the man to outline the complete plot. When he was finished. Mason smiled with assurance and walked out of the building, followed by Crane.

THE start of the race found John quivering with excitement and Gloria gripping her father's arm frantically. Boy stood near the rail, held by Andy. Warrior, ridden by the famous jockey, Littlespot, was prancing wildly on the track. Littlespot brought him back in the starting position again, but only after a struggle with the spirited animal.

At the starting gun, Warrior broke with the other horses and the race was on. Warrior fell into third position, as Mr. Benton had planned. California Lad led at the quarter, with Fanton second.

At the back stretch Warrior pulled up within a head of the leader.

Then it happened!

The jockey riding Fanton brought his whip up, cracking Warrior in the face! Dazed, Warrior fell back, and Fanton's jockey yanked his horse in front of Warrior, pocketing him against the fence.

For a long moment Benton and Gloria stared stupefied at what had happened. They did not see the whip-blow to Warrior's face. They only knew that Warrior was pocketed and there was no chance for him to get out. California Lad increased his lead to two full lengths. Other horses passed Warrior, who was still held against the fence.

He dropped back to last place, unable to get away from the fence without fouling Fanton who was being ridden at his side. The crowd, not knowing what had happened, rose to their feet and cheered California Lad. The horses came around the last curve of the home stretch.

Then suddenly the crowd stopped cheering. They were looking at a grim drama of certain death being staged on the track. Boy, sensing that Warrior was in trouble, had broken the leash and was out on the track, directly in front of the oncoming horses! In a second, their hoofs would crush him to death!

THE horses thundered down on him. He was suddenly swallowed up in their cloud of dust. The crowd gasped. Then out of the dust came Warrior, streaking forward like a flash. And ahead of him was Boy, racing with all the speed he could muster!

Boy sped past the horses, leading Warrior on at breathless speed! Then he stopped at the finish line, well ahead of the pounding pack. He whirled and barked as Warrior came on, straining every muscle to beat the other horses to his wild friend and companion.

If he didn't get there first, Warrior knew that the other horses would crush Boy to death—that he would never move until he reached him! It was their old game, played when they were pups and when they roamed the mountains as two wild creatures!

Inch by inch, Warrior pulled up on California Lad. Boy was waiting faithfully for him to reach him first. He was at the finish line. His barks of encouragement to his friend came through the grand stand.

But Warrior's efforts failed to take him past California Lad. That great horse was within a few yards of the finish now, his hoofs cutting the dirt. In seconds they would be crushing Boy's immobile body. Yet the dog did not move!

He gave one last, wild bark. Warrior heard it. With a wild, insane burst of speed he fairly flew through the air! The crowd roared. They were watching the impossible! Warrior's head went in front of California Lad. They crossed the finish line—with Warrior leading!

OUT of the dust of the finish came Boy, having darted out of the way the second Warrior reached him and the finish line.

"A great performance!" Benton cried, running up to John.

"You mean," John corrected him, "the dog is a great trainer. *He* won the race!"

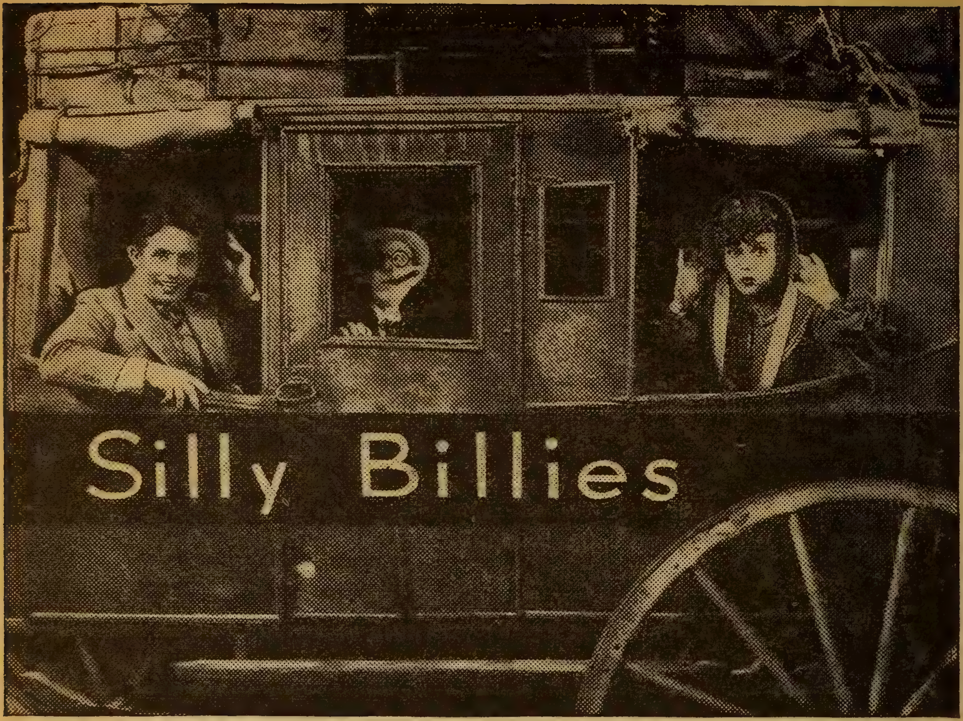
Benton coughed uncomfortably.

"I still say," he answered, "that it takes three generations to make a gentleman. I guess I just didn't know what generation to start with—and that applies to others beside the dog."

John looked at Gloria. Her hand reached out to grasp his. Their hands met. Then Gloria laughed and said:

"The wreath they gave Warrior is where it belongs, all right!"

John looked out on the track. Warrior had reared up to greet Boy, and the great wreath thrown around his neck had slipped off. It was lying across Boy's back as the horse and the dog rubbed noses happily.



Silly Billies

They were nuts about teeth—and a toothsome blonde—and the wide open spaces where cavities were cavities!

"PAINLESS DOC" PENNINGTON, and his assistant, Roy Banks, had taken Horace Greeley's advice. They'd have taken more than that, only Horace had things pretty well nailed down around his old shanty. Oh, even in 1850, Park Avenue had shanties. There was Elmer N. Shanty—the Shanty Irish—and, on occasions, Shanty Claus (hic).

But Doc and Roy had left the débutantes, the *Tribune*, and little old New York far behind. In fact, the overland stagecoach, in which they were bound for the Indian Territory of the West, would be reaching Newark in two days! And that wasn't sparing the horses!

There was a rumor of another heavyweight rassling match at Madison Square Garden, which explained, somewhat, why the westbound stage was a bit crowded of a New Jersey afternoon—that, and the fact that there was a gold rush in California. So, as the stagecoachers phrased it, it was: "Westward Ho!" In truth, it was: "Ho-ho-ho!" because there was more rush than gold. And the grunt and groan boys didn't appear at the Garden anyway.

From their upper berth, with their stocking feet dangling in and out of the beards of the men below, Doc and Roy were listening to the conversation of the excited group in the coach.

"It won't be many weeks before we're in California," said one of the passengers.

"There'll be gold in them thar hills," croaked another old prospective prospector.

But Doc and Roy weren't interested in the gold in them thar hills. It was the gold in them thar cavities which they were thinking about. Yes, sir, if there was gold in them, they'd take it out; if there wasn't, they'd put it in. They were dentists in the true sense of the word. Nothing false about *these* gentlemen!

They hadn't been in the profession very long. But their apprenticeship of twelve years in the plumbing business served them well. Twelve years! And not once had they forgotten to forget their tool case!

AS they rode along, the boys were harking back to these old days. To them, it seemed only like day before yesterday that they had exchanged their pliers for the forceps. It should have seemed like that, because it *was* only the day before yesterday.

In those days Doc was known as Ewald "Double-or-nothing" Jones. How he became "Painless Doc" Pennington was another story.

One day, the two washbowl wrestlers had just put the finishing touches on a dental sink for Doctor Philip Pennington, New York's painless dentist. And those finishing touches finished the sink all right. In fact, it was sunk. But so was old Doctor P. He couldn't pay the boys for the repairs they had made. To say nothing about the destruction they had made.

Whereupon, Ewald helped himself to a half dozen forceps, cocked his ubiquitous cigar to 45° N. by E., and shouted, "Double or nothing!"

A coin was flipped and Pennington lost. "Double or nothing!" again was the cry; and again the filling fixer lost. This time he lost his drilling machine. The game went on and on——

By the time the sun went down, Ewald and Roy, the bathroom busters, had "Double or nothinged" the dentist out of all his equipment, from the chair right down through the pivot teeth and the college diploma. In fact, the only thing left in Pennington's office to remind him of his profession was a broken-down toothpick. Even his own teeth (upper and lower) had fallen before this bivouac of bicuspid bankruptcy.

And that was the moment when Ewald and Roy were graduated from plumbing to dentistry. From that hour hence, Ewald was to be known as "Painless Doc" Pennington; and Roy, his first assistant.

But, as Roy observed at the time, they couldn't practice in New York. Everybody knew them there. So, they decided to go West—to the vast Indian Territory. Amos and Andy hadn't come to the redmen yet, so business was promising.

Carefully packing the dental supplies on the top of the stage, they settled themselves in the coach among the future Bronx cowboys and the Brooklyn cactus pickers. And with a "Yippee!" and a "Yowhoo!" they were off.

THE CAST

BERT WHEELER	Roy Banks
ROBERT WOOLSEY	"Doc" Pennington
DOROTHY LEE	Mary Blake
Harry Woods	Hank Bewley
Richard Alexander	J[illegible] Little

RKO Radio Pictures

Story by
Thomas Lennon and
Fred Guiol.

Screenplay by
Al Boasberg and
Jack Townley.

Directed by
Fred Guiol.

A fictionization of the RKO Radio picture of the same title.

FOUR days out of Newark, somewhere in the wilds of Pennsylvania, the stagecoach hit a rock in what was commonly called a road in the Keystone State. Doc thought it was the keystone, itself, that they hit, because the jolt was terrific, throwing the passengers hither and yon. In fact, when the dust cleared away, Doc and Roy discovered six faces they hadn't seen thus far on the journey.

Among this new half dozen was a pretty little miss who stood out like Ginger Rogers in an Old Man's Home. One look at her, and Roy and Doc were ready to quit the dentist business and go straight.

They would have, if the girl hadn't opened her lunch box and started to eat a rosy red apple. This opened Doc's professional eyes even further—he hadn't eaten in two days, himself.

"My dear little girl!" he addressed her. "If you eat that way, you won't have a tooth in your head in a week!"

"What am I doing wrong?" The girl was, indeed, surprised and alarmed.

"Cross-country mastication!" Doc replied. "Wait. I'll show you." He reached over and took the apple. "Now, in eating an apple or a pear——"

"She knows how to eat an apple!" Roy cut in. He was always one to save a lady in distress—or dat dress, it made no difference.

Doc glared at his assistant. "Yes. But does she know the difference between an apple and a pear? Miss, you can pare an apple, but you can't apple a pear! For instance—it takes two apples to make a pair, but only one pear to make a——"

DOC was really wound up in the fruit and tooth business. And it required two weeks and three States to get him unwound. As they bounced through Ohio, the Ohioans were oblivious to him—they never even heard him. But that was all right with Doc. He'd never heard of Ohio! Iowa was all ears. "That's where the tall corn grows!" As they reached the Missouri River, Doc was still going strong.

"—and always bite an apple from right to left. It's an old dental maxim—poetical, but true. It dates back to Adam. And of course you all know about Adam's apple."

At this point, Doc paused for breath. The temporary silence awakened Roy who had been asleep since Pittsburgh.

"Aw, gee, Doc," the assistant molar molder protested, "why don't you give these people a rest!" Then he added shyly, "Particularly this young lady."

"Thank you," the girl answered. She was shy, too. Shy two first-class eardrums.

"All right, Roy," Doc agreed, "you talk to her for a little while. Say, from now until the middle of next week. Then I'll get back in the harness again." This last crack brought a contemptuous neigh from the eight lumbering steeds up front. Horses and congress always vote in ayes and neighs.

Four days of silence passed within the stagecoach. Roy was trying to think how to start talking to this prairie flower. It was evident that Roy was a long, if not a deep, thinker. Finally, he gently cleared his throat. The farmers in the neighborhood thought another dust storm was coming up. Then he opened up a flowing barrage of oratory.

"Hello," he said.

"Hello," the girl replied.

Doc opened one eye. "Say! I didn't tell you to make a speech."

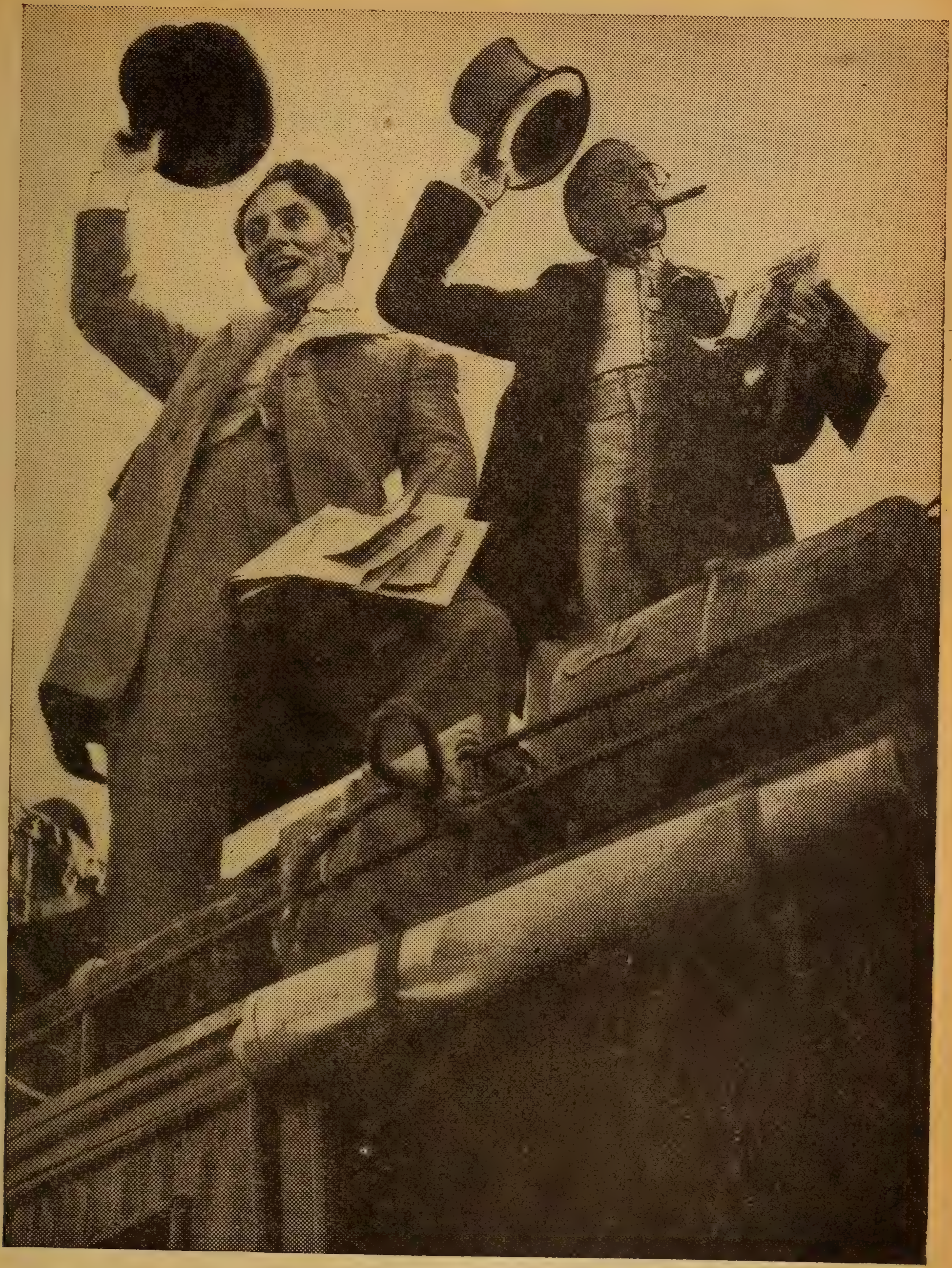
"What's your name?" Roy asked the girl, with a leer at Doc.

"Mary Blake."

"Mary Blake! Gee, what a pretty name. Mine's Roy Banks. Where are you going?"

"Out to the Indian Territory. I've got a job teaching school out there."

"The Indian Territory!" Roy was delighted. "That's where we're going. To Little Town."



"You're now looking at Painless Doc Pennington—the only dentist who ever attempted to fill the Grand Canyon!"

"Little Town!" Mary, the schoolmarm, exclaimed. "That's exactly where I'm going."

"Gee!"

"Gee!"

"Whoa!" Doc interjected, just to keep the horses in the right direction.

JUST as the Dutch spendthrifts had given the Mohawks a string of beads for Manhattan, hoping they'd strangle themselves before they got back to Poughkeepsie, so had the white brother been kind to his red brother in the West. In exchange for Texas, California, Wyoming, a tepee, and two left foot moccasins, the Indians had been given two bass drums and a vast territory of fertile prairie land—so fertile they could count the blades of grass on their fingers on a clear day. (Of course, that was during the years that the grass grew at all.)

Also the Indians had been blindfolded and then told to guess where their territory was, and to go to it. Not only that, but they were told to stay there.

Little Town was located in the northeast corner of the southwestern part of the Indian Territory—just north of the appendix, on the edge of the stomach. To the Indians it was a pain. Chief Rain-in-the-puss got it right the first time when he looked at Little Town and said that the Indians had a pain in their stomach.

Something bothered them, anyway, because they were on the warpath. And white brother or no white brother, a scalp was a scalp to them. With or without dandruff.

On this sunshiny afternoon the Little Towners weren't thinking about the Indians. They were drunk with excitement—the West's new name for corn likker.

Either they had just gotten the news flash of the California gold rush, or else they had just heard that Doc and Roy were on their way. For, every Little Towner, except one, was preparing to get out of town. That one was "Big Tom" Little, who owned the town and half the Indian's wigwams. Ugh!

Little was striding up and down the crowded street, getting in everybody's way, desperately trying to persuade them to stay home, not to go to California.

"I'm telling you," Little shouted a little, "you'll never get there! No wagon train that ever left here was ever heard from again."

"We ain't a-worrying!" the excited crowd shouted in reply.

"You'll be sorry," Big Little taunted.

"You're just mad because you won't have any one to rent your buildings to," called Lem Prouty. Lem was the village blacksmith. And the Indians always referred to him as the "great white father," which was something Lem never could understand. He never even got a hint from looking at his eighteen children!

"The Indians are on the warpath!" Little persisted.

"Don't you worry about us," put in another future grapefruit grower. "Hank Bewley'll get us through. They say he's one of the best scouts in these parts."

THAT was true. Bewley was one of the best scouts. But it all depended upon what he was scouting for. Right now he was under the table in the back room of The XX (the Double-cross) Saloon, scouting for his pal, "Trigger." Only Trigger didn't live there any more. After ten days, Trigger had come to and decided to go home. *He* was no bar-fly!

Disgusted, Bewley tossed down a dozen Mexican Martinis and rolled back out into the street. Climbing upon the end of a covered wagon, he ordered the crowd to gather around. He was about to make a speech. (Now, the Indians were going to get gas on their stomach.)

To these roving ranchers Bewley was a combination of "Little Eva," Napoleon, and the Detroit Tigers. They trusted him, praised him, but never loaned him money. He was their friend, their leader, their guide, their palsy-walsy. As Hank stood there on the wagon the crowd cheered and shouted. Whooping it up for dear old Bewley!

"My friends," the scout began. "We're pulling out of here at dusk." *(Cheers.)* "Remember! It takes provisions and equipment to lick the West. *(More cheers.)* And PLENTY of water!! *(Groans.)* And good containers to carry it in." (That was one way to avert an Indian attack—they could drown the Indians.)

"Have plenty of grease on your axles . . . have all your animals well shod. Ain't nothin'll slow down a bunch of horses quicker than sore feet."

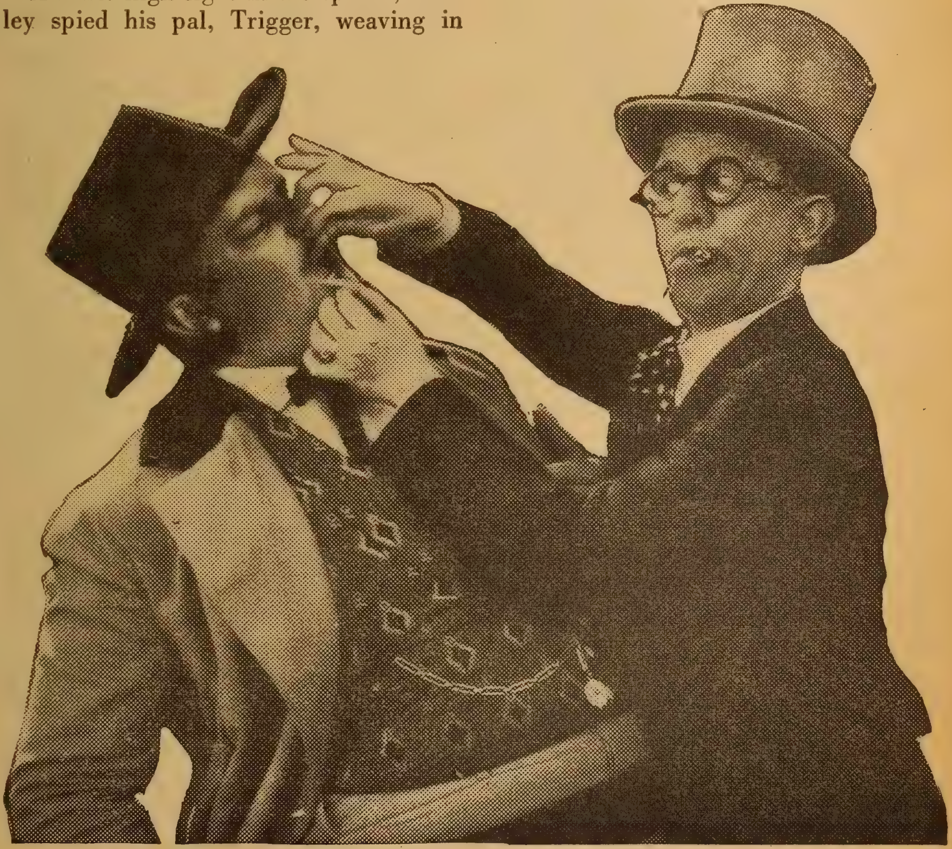
AT this high light in his speech, Bewley spied his pal, Trigger, weaving in and out of the spittons in front of the local barber shop. After shouting a few more orders to the crowd, Bewley jumped off the wagon and hurried over to his henchman.

"All ready to go, Trigger?"

"Yeah," Trigger replied quietly. "Think this trip'll be as easy as the last one, pardner?"

"There's nothing to worry about," Bewley assured. "We lead the wagon train into Lone Gulch and Chief Cyclone and his warriors will be there in ambush. When it's over, we get the cash—they get what's left."

Trigger was still a bit uneasy, and unsteady, too.



They were right when they called Doc a "practicing dentist." He practiced on anyone who would let him!

"Yeah, Hank, but when we went across before, the cavalry wasn't in that territory. They are now. If they catch up with us, it'll be too bad."

"Forget it, Trigger," Bewley assured with mock cunning on his face. "We can always tell them we were ahead scouting, and couldn't get back!"

THIS villainous plotting was suddenly brought to an abrupt halt by a mild roar at the east end of town. Racing, surging, thundering down Main Street of Little Town came the overland stage, with Doc and Roy at the controls.

On and on it came. Past the barber shop; past the Double-cross; three times around the post office; into the hotel lobby and out onto the street again. The boys didn't know how to stop it.

Had it been a leaking radiator or a toothache, it would have been a different story. But a horse is a horse is a horse is a horse, to quote Miss Stein, and all their monkey wrenches couldn't stop it. Doc was ready to lower the lifeboats. But Big Tom Little stepped into the street, grabbed one of the horses, and brought the stage to a stop.

"Thanks, pardner!" Doc shouted. "I was just going to do that myself!"

As the passengers got out, the mob in the street crowded around them. There were kisses and hugs and greetings of welcome. Doc set a new record of kissing twenty-one squaws without getting shot. Roy just hugged. Hugged the dental chair and a big set of papier-mâché teeth.

"Don't go away, folks!" Doc shouted. "Don't go 'way! Allow me to introduce myself. You are now looking at Painless Doc Pennington—the only dentist who ever attempted to fill the Grand Canyon! I don't imagine that you left a stone unturned to welcome me——"

One of Lem Prouty's eighteen took aim with his sling-shot, and something hit Doc smack on the conk.

"Now, I'm sure you didn't!" Doc added quickly. "However, let me introduce my assistant, Roy Banks. We'll be ready for business just as soon as we secure an office. Get out those handbills, Roy, and let's get 'em circulated. We've got to build up our circulation!"

Immediately, Doc and Roy were off down the street, throwing handbills to each and every Little Towner. As the people read the bills, they broke out in laughter.

"If they expect any business here, they'll have to pull their own teeth!" chuckled something under a ten-gallon hat.

"They won't have no trouble getting an office, though," said another.

"Ha!" added a third. "They'll have the whole town to themselves."

IT was a big joke to these Westerners. They took their humor hard, like their liquor. But, to Big Tom Little this was a real-estate boom of no small proportions. So Big Tom lost no time in hurrying down the street after the wisdom-tooth wizards. When he finally overtook them, they were twenty-five feet up in the air holding a consultation concerning the teeth in the George Washington statue.

"Hey, Doc!" Little called up at them.

In a flash, the boys were down from the statue. And before Little could say another word, they flipped him into the chair, propped open his mouth, and stared in.

"Wait till I strike a match," Roy offered. "We can see better."

"Ah!" Doc uttered with his best professional manner. "Your front laterals indicate hardening of the enamel, which will lead to varicose veins of the bicuspids, and a nervous breakdown."

"Couldn't we put in a new sewer system?" Roy inquired.

"No!" Doc snapped back. "And don't let any more of those matches fall down the patient's throat!" He turned to Little. "That'll be $3, please."

"Pardner, there ain't nothin' wrong with my teeth," Big Tom drawled as he got up out of the chair. "I'm a real-estate man, and I hear you're interested in an office."

"Your hearing's pretty good, pard," Doc replied. "But I'm still worried about those teeth. Yes, we're looking for an office."

"Well, stranger, you're standing right in front of the best office in this town. And by luck, it's vacant. Step inside and take a look at it."

The boys broke through the cobwebs on the door and went in. In a split second, they came tearing out again.

"Say!" Roy yelled, "that's not an office. That's a zoo!"

Big Tom explained to them that the building had been previously occupied by the "TRAPPERS AND TRADERS FUR & TAXIDERMY COMPANY"; and that the company had forgotten some of their models. That explanation satisfied Doc, but it took a bit of coaxing to get Roy to reënter the building.

The walls of the office were lined with stuffed birds and animals from all parts of the West. Huge teeth and fangs were bared; and glassy eyes stared down at their every move.

"Some tough-looking birds around here," Roy remarked in a frightened tone.

"Yeah," Doc replied. "I'm going to send home for that stuffed turkey we had last Christmas. That was tough enough to be in here, too."

They inspected the building from bow to stern, from cellar to attic, from right to left, and upstairs and down. All the time, Big Tom kept up his sales talk about the fresh air, the heat, the light, and the additional rooms for sleeping quarters.

He would probably have put through his deal sooner, only he unwittingly mentioned the plumbing. And, to Roy and Doc, that was like playing the Star Spangled Banner. For, during the next two hours, Doc argued about where the water was when you turned on the spigot and no water came out!

At length, Little, exhausted a little, brought the discussion to a close with the tactful remark, "Well, how much rent will you pay?"

He loaded the sling with a chloroform-soaked sponge and took aim.

After a huddle, the teeth terrifiers replied, "Five hundred!"

"Five hundred dollars——" Big Tom gasped. "Boys, for five hundred dollars you can have the place!"

AS he departed—just to celebrate the sale—Big Tom brought out the old whisky jug. The jug was the only old part of it. However, it worked. But the boys didn't. They had intended to, but they didn't.

And when the Eastbound stage pulled out at nine o'clock, with Tom Little packed in among the cactus plants, Doc and Roy were studying the dental problems in their patient-filled office. The patients being the former models of the "TRAPPERS AND TRADERS FUR & TAXIDERMY COMPANY."

Wabbling bleary-eyed about the room, Doc paused to steady himself against the hatrack. His hands felt the brim of his hat. Blinking, he turned and spoke.

"Madam, you jush got here in time. I would shay that you have a very rare condishion—known as dentaflexis—causing the teeth to become pliable and wave in the wind——"

"Hey, Doc!" Roy interrupted. "Come here."

After several detours around the room Doc arrived at Roy's side. Roy, weaving back and forth, was holding onto an ugly-looking boar's head.

"Washamadder?" Doc was losing his grip—to say nothing of his sight, hearing, and equilibrium. He had already lost his shoes.

"Shomething serious," Roy replied. "He wants a tooth filled, and I can't get hish mouth open!"

Doc meditated a moment, considering the case in semisilence. Finally, he reached a verdict.

"He's got lock-jaw!"

That consultation floored them both. In fact they rolled all the way under the dental chair. And from then on, it was all quiet on the western front.

THE next day dawned bright and early. And it dawned upon Doc and Roy to get up and get ready for business. As the sun eked its way in through the cracks in the window shades, the events of the night before were brought to light.

Doc had spent the night under the chair with his head snuggled in between the uppers and lowers of the papier-mâché set of teeth. Roy was all gummed up, too.

The stuffed animals were now a joy to the dental world. The coyotes had gold fillings by the dozen; the wild cats were left with nothing but their gums; and the goats had exchanged molars with the grizzly bears. The giraffes were left untouched, however—Doc and Roy hadn't been able to reach that far. All in all, their practice had been varied, if not extensive.

It didn't require much time for them to "set-up" for business. And by eight-thirty and a half they had the chair bolted down, the instruments sharpened, and the chloroform uncanned. The drums were rolled, the dental college alma mater was sung, and the doors were thrown open. Roy was a pretty good thrower, and the doors landed across the street.

But no patients came. The only thing that passed through the doorway was the odor of the night before, on its way out.

The boys hurried out into the street. The place was deserted; no people; no noise. Little Town had become a ghost town overnight.

"I guess these people sleep late around here," Roy remarked as he stared up and down the empty street.

Doc went into the middle of the street and cupped his hands.

"Yoooooo-hoooooo!"

No patients arrived, and Doc's patience departed.

"YOOOOOO-HOOOOOO!" he thundered out again.

Suddenly, Roy's attention was attracted by something flapping on the doorsill of their office. It didn't look like a patient, but they couldn't take any chances. Back into the office they ran.

"It's a letter!" Roy shouted, as he spied an envelope tacked to the sill.

"Well, open it," Doc suggested. "Maybe somebody wants a tooth filled by mail."

HURRIEDLY tearing open the letter, they discovered that it was from Mary Blake, the prairie pedagogue, their comely colleague of the overland stage. The letter explained everything.

Upon arrival, Mary had learned that the entire community was California conscious. The school board had ruled that, if she wanted her job she would have to go along with the wagon train and teach the children en route. They were headed for the gold fields and they weren't coming back.

Even though the boys knew that the earthquakes and Hollywood would change the Little Towner's minds, they were more than a little discouraged.

"They can't do this to us!" Doc growled. "I'll take it up before the next council meeting."

"We got to find a way to bring those people back here so that there will be a council to meet to take it up before," was Roy's downhearted reply.

SUNK in despair up to their neck, and mud up to their knees, the boys sat down. Business hadn't been so good that day, and now this news. They were both in the mood for a good funeral, but the only one around was their own.

Then, quietly, out of the west came the dull beat of horses' hoofs. A moment later a covered wagon and four horses raced into Little Town, and careened wildly down Main Street.

With the first sight of it, Doc and Roy leaped into the street. Shouting, waving, blowing whistles, they brought the wagon to a stop.

Strutting boldly up to the wagon, the dental dynamiters were all ready to add or subtract. That was, as far as teeth were concerned. But they soon made a discovery which almost jarred their own fillings loose.

Slumped down under the seat was the driver. Slack reins in one hand and a scrap of paper in his other.

"Is he full of liquor?" Roy asked.

"He's full of lead!" Doc replied as he lowered his cigar to half mast.

"Then it's *his* funeral, not ours," Roy answered.

There was really nothing the boys could do. The dental union had ruled out embalming and grave-digging at their last convention. They were about to leave the corpus delecti to amuse himself, when they caught sight of the note in his clenched fist.

Thinking that it might be the driver's will, and themselves his heirs, they passed a motion to read the note at once. It was a difficult scrawl but it made sense.

> Little Town wagon train in danger —Indians—massacre—notify Army Post. Overheard train being led into ambush by Hank Bewley——

Instantly, a cloud of dust arose from Main Street. Doc and Roy tossed out the corpsey-worpsey, loaded in their dental equipment, and dashed off across the prairie.

Lives were at stake! Or would be if the Indians got hungry. And Mary Blake was on the threshold of premature baldness; the redman might decide to un-*tress* Mary, the elegant educator!

MID-AFTERNOON found the Little Town wagon train far out on the parched prairie, trundling along toward Lone Gulch. With these covered-wagon cruisers it was "So far, so good." They hadn't run out of gas, nor had any flat tires. And they all had the same heads of hair that they started out with.

Their chief worry had been the sling-shot of Lem Prouty's pride and joy, Morton. His was the dead eye which had drawn the bead on Doc back in Little Town.

As they rambled along, Mary Blake was instructing her class the difference between a tomahawk and a soup spoon—just in case! It had something to do with, "Which would you rather have sticking in your face?"

BEWLEY and Trigger, the scampering scouts, were far ahead of the wagon train. Almost into Lone Gulch. In the Gulch, rarin' to go, were Chief Cyclone and his braves. His braves were a much stronger outfit than the Boston Braves. They finished third in their own league.

So, aside from a few like Bewley, the Little Towners were anticipating a peaceful afternoon of racing with the tumbleweed. But, suddenly, into that Western tranquillity came the charging dentists. And dentists can charge!

Swooping in from nowhere, with sirens blowing and bells clanging, Doc and Roy stampeded up to the wagon train.

"Hold your horses, boys!" Doc shouted. "The Indians are coming! Bewley is selling you short to Chief Cyclone——"

"Everybody—tall *and* short," Roy added quaintly.

If there was doubt, or anything else, in the minds of the Little Towners, Doc and Roy dispelled it by brandishing the scrawled note as evidence.

And the traveling toothmen had arrived just in the nick of time. For, lo! Over yonder hill came Chief Cyclone and his Boston Braves! (This should be the Cherokee Braves, shouldn't it? Editor.) (Who cares? They won't win, anyway. Author.)

"FORM the circle!" the cry went up throughout the wagon train. "Form the circle!"

Slowly, but in time, the corners were knocked off and the circle formed. Women and children were brought to the center; trunks were upset and set up as barracades; muskets were taken out of the moth balls; and the siege began.

The Indians rode around and around.

Doc thought it was a merry-go-round, so he hung up a brass ring. For that stroke of genius he was placed in command. Seeing that they were outnumbered by their foemen, Doc installed Lem Prouty's eighteen sling-shotters in the second-line trenches. The graybeards, he put up front. He hoped their beards would act as camouflage.

And the Indians rode 'round and 'round, oh-ho-ho-ho!

GETTING nowhere shooting mothballs out of old rusty muskets, Doc went into conference with Roy. They came out of it quickly, and with them their dental sponges and chloroform. Filing into the second-line trench, they halted along side the Prouty regiment.

"Give me one of those sling-shots," Doc ordered. "This isn't ethical, but war is war."

Without hesitation he loaded the sling with a chloroform-soaked sponge and took aim. *Twing! Squash!!* The sponge scored a direct hit in the mouth and another redskin bit the dust!

Still, the Indians rode 'round and 'round. And not one of them had hooked the brass ring yet!

BUT, at length, Doc saw that his men, methods, and muskets were failing before the innumerable host of roughriding redmen. He turned to Roy.

"Son, I can't give up the ship. It's up to you. We need help. Ride to the army post for Captain Smith and the cavalry. If you can't get him, bring

Jack Dalton and the United States Marines!"

While Roy rode off, Doc went back to his problem of what to do with the Indians. There wasn't any problem in what the Indians would do to him. Then, suddenly, an idea hit him—hard! He picked himself up off the ground and started running around in circles to encourage the Indians.

If he could keep them moving around that circle long enough, they'd get dizzy and the whole battle would be over! But the Indians had done this before. In fact their entire lives had been spent in going 'round and 'round.

For one hour more, for two hours more, for three hours more, Doc and his men held the line. But as the shadows lengthened it looked like Chief Cyclone and his boys were going to push over a score. Second down and one yard to go!

Things looked black for Doc. But if he had glanced over his left shoulder he would have seen that things were blue again. Dark blue.

High up on the surrounding ridge the bugles blew, the flags waved, and Roy and Captain Smith led the U. S. Cavalry into battle.

To Doc's surprise the Indians stopped going 'round and 'round. In fact, Bewley, Trigger, Chief Cyclone, and all the braves were in full retreat. But the retreat didn't last long, nor far enough. Because Captain Smith and his boys were soon going 'round and 'round the Indians!

BACK at the wagon train Doc and Roy were receiving the praise and gratitude of Mary and Prouty, and all the other Little Towners. As they sat there, glowing, a delicate "*twing*" came from the far end of the circle. Something hit Doc on the conk.

"Son, the war's over!" Doc grumbled as he picked up the stone young Prouty had shot. But he said no more for a moment. His attention was centered on the stone. As he looked at it, his eyes popped and his cigar took on life afresh.

"Where did you get that stone, my boy?" Doc questioned.

"Back in Little Town. I got a bag full of them, just like that, in our wagon."

"HEY!" Doc shouted. "That's GOLD!"

If the natives never worked fast before, they sure put on the pressure in getting their wagons turned back toward Little Town. And in the twilight, Doc, Mary, and Roy rode slowly back over the prairie. The schoolmarm addressed the two tooth takers.

"For your bravery and kindness, you get a kiss."

"Double or nothing" Doc replied. And he puckered up his cigar-laden lips.

DESIRE

A Paramount picture, with Gary Cooper and Marlene Dietrich.

All of Miss Dietrich's previous pictures have been very heavy handed things. Now, however, Paramount gives her a chance to do a comedy with Gary Cooper, which has all the lightness and good fun of "Hands Across the Table." You will like this one if you have never liked Dietrich before, and you will find her much more delightful in this, if you have always been one of her fans.

MARLENE DIETRICH—GARY COOPER—AND A GRAND TIME.

They've got

"ANTS in the PANTRY"

Columbia's famous nuts

THE THREE STOOGES

gives you their latest dizzy comedy script in its original form

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is the scenario used in making the Three Stooges' comedy, "Ants in the Pantry." Needless to say, there is much that goes into the filming of a picture that does not appear in a script—mannerisms of the actors, bits of action that are developed "on the lot" during the shooting, et cetera.

But, as substantially as possible, the scenario which is put in the director's hands—and which you now have in yours—is what is seen on the screen.

Different producing companies have different styles in which their scenarios are written. However, they all follow certain general lines. One standard rule is that the first line of each scene should contain the scene number, the scene subject, and the camera instructions. Thus we have:

12 FULL SHOT—INT. MRS. BURLAP'S DRAWING-ROOM.

The term, *FULL SHOT*, tells the cameraman that he is to include everything in the scene that he can get. Other camera instructions, such as *CLOSEUP, CLOSE SHOT, MED.* (Medium) *SHOT*, et cetera, cover other situations. The camera angles are changed for each scene to avoid monotony.

Most scenes change from one to the other by simple "cuts"—that is, by ending abruptly and starting immediately. However, sometimes the scenario writer wants to get a special effect, such as a change of locale or time. In this case he frequently resorts to a "wipe off," or a "dissolve"—two different methods of showing two scenes on the screen at the same time, one scene disappearing while the next one appears.

THE art of reading and enjoying a scenario lies not so much in understanding what you see on the paper before you, but in being able to visualize what it will look like on the screen. In order to really enjoy this script to the fullest extent, you should be familiar with the Three Stooges' style—you should know how they line up before the camera, what the difference is between a double slap and a double-triple slap, et cetera.

However, in view of the fact that the Three Stooges are among the screen's most popular lunatics, we feel sure that the majority of our readers will find themselves on well-traveled territory as they read on.)

Moe Curly Larry

FADE IN ON:

1 *SIGN reading:*

"LIGHTNING PEST CONTROL, Inc.
Rodents Exterminated
HERMAN MOUSER, Manager."

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

2 *MED. CLOSE SHOT—INT. MOUSER'S OFFICE*

Mr. Mouser, a middle-aged Dutchman with a handle-bar moustache, is on; he has a worried look. A stenographer is opening letters as she hands them to him. Mouser speaks with a thick Dutch accent.

MOUSER: Any checks?

STENOGRAPHER: No checks, Mr. Mouser. All bills.

Mouser gets frantic as he exclaims:

MOUSER: Bills, bills—nothing but bills! This rat-catching business is going to the dogs! . . . Where are those three loafers?

Stenographer points to the next room and says:

STENOGRAPHER: They're in there talking politics.

MOUSER: Politics——

STENOGRAPHER: Yeh. I just heard one of 'em say, "Let's have a new deal."

Mouser leaps to his feet angrily and goes toward the office door adjoining, saying as he walks:

MOUSER: What you mean—a new deal?

2a *CLOSE SHOT—OTHER SIDE OF DOOR*

As Mouser enters and takes it as he sees:

3 *MED. FULL SHOT—BACK ROOM*

Rodent exterminator paraphernalia is scattered about. The THREE STOOGES are on playing cards. Moe is shuffling while Mouser watches upstage. Moe gives the cards a final riffle, shoves them over to Curly.

MOE: Cut 'em.

Curly cuts the cards. Moe gets angry, and says:

Oh, so you don't trust me, eh?

He throws the cards at Curly, who ducks.

4 *CLOSE SHOT MOUSER*

At door. The cards hit him in the face.

MOUSER: Voss iss loss here?

5 *FULL SHOT BACK ROOM*

The boys all turn and see the boss—as Larry and Curly jump up and exit, frightened. Moe steps over to Mouser.

MOE: Good mornin', boss. Any calls?

MOUSER: Calls he vants yet! Get out, you loafers und dig up some business, or you're fired!

MOE: Rat catchin' ain't what it used to be.

MOUSER: Don't argue mitt me!

He turns away, and as he does so, Larry enters with a steel trap. In his other hand he carries a butterfly net. Moe looks at Larry.

MOE: *(pointing to trap)* What's that for?

LARRY: To catch mice, of course.

MOE: Catch mice—with *that?*

He grabs the trap from Larry and throws it on a chair, disgustedly; then turns to Mouser.

MOE: Give us another chance, will you, boss?

Mouser weaves around, points a finger in Moe's face as he says angrily:

MOUSER: All right—but if you don't bring in some business to-day, don't even come back!

He starts to sit down in the chair, as Moe answers.

MOE: Okay, boss. Leave it to us——

6 *CLOSEUP, TRAP*

Springing on Mouser's seat.

7 *MED. CLOSE SHOT*

Mouser as he reacts to trap and yells.

MOUSER: Help! Help! Take it off! It's biting me!

8 *FULL SHOT, GROUP*

Mouser stands up with trap on seat. Moe grabs chain of trap and starts to pull; gives it a big tug. Trap comes loose and Moe falls over backward—pulling out the entire seat of Mouser's trousers.

9 *CLOSEUP MOUSER*

As he falls on his hands and knees, exposing seat of his pants.

10 *FULL SHOT, GROUP*

Mouser turns on them angrily.

MOUSER: *Dumbkofs!* Get out!

The boys exit as we

WIPE OFF TO:

11 *FULL SHOT—EXT. FRONT ELEGANT-LOOKING MANSION*

SHOOTING through iron gate, front of house. A party is in progress—cars driving up, people getting out, et cetera. The Three Stooges enter with all their paraphernalia. Curly carries a bag of cats; one cute-looking kitten is sticking its head out through a hole in the sack. Larry carries a large black suitcase in one hand, and a small cardboard box perforated with holes in the other. Moe carries a butterfly net and a small pair of bellows. Moe takes in the situation at a glance, turns to Larry and Curly.

MOE: I think we struck oil. Come on.

PAN WITH THEM to a side door. As they enter the premises

WIPE OFF TO:

12 *FULL SHOT—INT. MRS. BURLAP'S DRAWING-ROOM*

Guests arriving—some in costume, some with week-end bags, et cetera.

13 *MED. CLOSE SHOT AT HALL ENTRANCE*

Mrs. Burlap is on greeting guests. A woman, a friend of Mrs. Burlap, is standing near her. Butler enters and announces Lord Stoke-Pogis. He comes in and Mrs. Burlap greets him.

MRS. BURLAP: My *deah* Lord Stoke-Pogis! I'm so glad you're going on the Fox Chase with us! You look chawming!

STOKE-POGIS: Thank you. You know, the lawst time I rode to hounds was with His Grace, the Duke of Chatterbury.

Gawkins, the butler, steps forward and takes Stoke-Pogis' week-end bag. Mrs. Burlap's friend nudges her in an aside.

MRS. B.'S FRIEND: This occasion will undoubtedly place you at the top of the social ladder.

MRS. BURLAP: Do you really think so?

The woman friend nods assurance.

14 *EXT. GARDEN, AT SIDE OF HOUSE*

Taking in small bedroom window. We see three cyprus bushes slowly creeping toward the house. As they come to a stop a dog runs in, sniffs at one of the bushes. Moe's head appears and he shoos the dog away; then turning toward the two other bushes——

MOE: Come on, guys—let's get goin'.

They drop the bushes and quickly raise the window. As Larry and Moe boost Curly in——

15 *FULL SHOT—INT. BEDROOM*

It is beautifully dressed with closet upstage. Curly and Larry come in through window. Larry opens the suitcase, takes out a quart jar.

INSERT: QUART JAR
labeled: "RED ANTS"

BACK TO SCENE:

Larry goes over to bed, pulls back the covers and pours ants in the bed. Curly picks up a box from suitcase, walks to closet door, PAN WITH HIM as he takes out a handful of moths from the box and throws them in the closet, all over the clothes, then sprays in full contents of box. He quickly closes the closet door.

16 *CLOSEUP LARRY*

He takes out a box of mice, tiptoes, to hallway door, opens it and shoos the mice out.

17 *FULL SHOT OF BEDROOM*

CURLY: Hurry up. Somebody might catch us.

LARRY: Take it easy. They can't hear us.

18 *EXT. CLOSEUP AT WINDOW*

With shade down. Moe pulls it aside to look in—as it flies up with a BANG!

19 *FULL SHOT OF BEDROOM*

Larry and Curly gather up their things, slap them into suitcase—Larry pinching Curly's fingers. He yells:

CURLY: OUCH!

Both of them quickly dive out of window.

20 *EXT. WINDOW—FULL SHOT*

Curly and Larry land on Moe and they fall into some bushes. As Moe comes up——

MOE: What's the matter with you guys? Want us to get caught?

21 *FULL SHOT—INT. BEDROOM*

Maid enters with some wraps over her arm, goes to closet door, opens it. A cloud of moths fly out. She takes it, alarmed, just as Mrs. Burlap and her friend enter, talking and laughing ad lib. The maid slams the door shut quickly, as Mrs. Burlap sits down at dressing table and her friend sits on side of bed.

MRS. BURLAP *(to maid)*: Della, get me those other shoes—these hurt.

MAID: Yes, ma'am.

She slightly opens the closet door and reaches down for some shoes.

22 *CLOSE SHOT, MRS. BURLAP'S FRIEND*

Sitting on bed, talking. She starts to get itchy and scratches herself while talking; finally excuses herself and leaves the room.

23 *MED. SHOT—MRS. BURLAP AND MAID*

Mrs. Burlap at dressing table. Maid enters and sets down shoes, pulls off Mrs. Burlap's shoe and quickly puts on the other—as Mrs. Burlap lets out a quick scream and pulls her foot out of shoe. A mouse leaps out of shoe and scoots across floor and out of room. Mrs. Burlap and maid take it. The maid screams, as Mrs. Burlap quickly gets into bed to get her feet off the floor, yelling:

MRS. BURLAP: Gawkins! Gawkins! Get GAWKINS!

MAID: Yes'm.

She exits hurriedly.

24 *FULL SHOT OF BEDROOM*

As maid goes out, Mrs. Burlap's friend returns and sees Mrs. Burlap scratching.

MRS. B.'S FRIEND: I thought it was just me, but I see you have them, too.

MRS. BURLAP: Oh, this is terrible! I can't understand it!

At this point the maid returns with Gawkins, the butler.

GAWKINS: Did you call, ma'am?

MRS. BURLAP: The house is infested with rodents, ants, mice, and—everything!

MAID: And moths!

MRS. BURLAP: Do something about it immediately!

GAWKINS: Very well, ma'am.

He exits.—Mrs. Burlap turns to her friend.

MRS. BURLAP: If any one finds out, I'll be disgraced forever!

25 *EXT. BACK DOOR OF MANSION*

The Three Stooges enter. Moe rings the bell. Door opens and Gawkins the butler appears.

GAWKINS: What is it?

MOE: Have you got any mice, rats, fleas, or bugs you want exterminated?

GAWKINS: Heaven must have sent you to us! I'll say we have. Come right in.

The three look at each other significantly, as Gawkins admits them.

26 *DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY—MED. SHOT*

As butler and boys enter.

GAWKINS: One moment, please.

He exits. The boys look around.

CURLY: Swell dump, huh?

MOE *(to Curly, who has cats over his shoulder)*: Ditch those cats.

CURLY: Where'll I put 'em?

MOE: Put 'em where you got 'em.

Larry reaches in a box and pulls out a mouse. He is about to set it on the floor when Moe gives him a boot and straightens him up.

MOE: What's the matter with you —are you crazy? Ditch that mouse!

At this point the butler enters upstage.

GAWKINS: Right this way, ma'am.

Larry quickly flips the mouse in his hat and puts his hat on.

27 *CLOSE SHOT OF GROUP*

Gawkins and Mrs. Burlap enter.

GAWKINS: These are the pest exterminators.

MOE: How do you do?

Moe turns to Curly, who imitates him—then looks at Larry.

28 *TWO SHOT, MOE AND LARRY*

Seeing Larry has not removed his hat, Moe nudges him and says under his breath:

MOE: Tip your hat.

Which Larry does—revealing the mouse on top of his head. Moe quickly brushes it off.

29 *GROUP SHOT*

Mrs. Burlap raises her lorgnette and looks at them.

MOE: What you got, lady—rats?

LARRY: Maybe she's got ants.

CURLY: I bet she's got fleas.

Mrs. Burlap takes this indignantly; then recovers.

MRS. BURLAP: It's most embarrassing to admit it—but we have everything!

CURLY: You're tellin' us!

Moe elbows him quickly, as Mrs. Burlap turns to Gawkins and says in an aside:

MRS. BURLAP: You'd better dress them as guests, so no one will know why they're here.

GAWKINS: Yes, ma'am. Very well, ma'am.

Mrs. Burlap turns to Moe.

MRS. BURLAP: This is very embarrassing for me. If you will exterminate the rodents without any one being the wiser, I will reward you handsomely.

MOE: You can depend on us, ma'am.

CURLY: We never miss.

LARRY: You can say it again.

Moe shuts them up.

GAWKINS: Right this way——

They follow the butler through a bedroom door, as Mrs. Burlap exits to drawing-room, quite worried.

30 *FULL SHOT—INT. DRAWING-ROOM*

Guests on, all dressed for Fox Hunt. Mrs. Burlap enters and starts to peer about under settee and chairs cautiously. She lifts the corner of a rug and looks underneath.

31 *MED. CLOSE SHOT*

Stoke-Pogis enters with another woman. Mrs. Burlap quickly regains her composure as she says nervously to Stoke-Pogis:

MRS. BURLAP: Have you noticed anything?

STOKE-POGIS: Why, what do you mean?

Mrs. Burlap realizes she spoke out of turn and covers it.

MRS. BURLAP: Did you see my new necklace?

She shows the pearls to him and he examines them minutely.

STOKE-POGIS: They are beautiful—just like the owner.

MRS. BURLAP: Oh, Lord, you're such a flatterer!

32 *CLOSE SHOT AT BUFFET AGAINST WALL*

Several guests are having drinks. Among them is seated a drunk, who is filling his glass by first squirting a little shot of seltzer and then half filling the glass with whisky. As he starts to drink——

33 *CLOSEUP OF HIS FEET*

A mouse is climbing up the outside of his pants-leg.

34 *CLOSEUP OF DRUNK*

He is drinking as mouse climbs on his knee. He finishes drinking; sees mouse; looks at glass and puts it down quickly, while wildly staring at mouse.

35 *CLOSEUP MRS. BURLAP*

As she sees mouse and exits.

36 *MED. FULL SHOT*

Of the drunk as Mrs. Burlap enters. He looks at her, bewildered and yells out.

DRUNK: Look! Look! A mouse!

Embarrassed, Mrs. Burlap quickly brushes the mouse off his knee with her fan.

MRS. BURLAP: There now, Tony, you mustn't drink so much. Next thing you know, you'll be seeing pink elephants.

He looks back at his knee, sees the mouse is gone and is puzzled. Mrs. Burlap glances about furtively, hoping no one else has seen or heard.

37 *FULL SHOT OF HALLWAY*

The butler comes out of a bedroom door, followed by the Stooges. They are dressed in fox hunting costumes.

GAWKINS: Get to work at once, but, please, don't make yourselves conspicuous.

MOE: Okay.

Butler exits.

38 *CLOSE THREE SHOT—STOOGES*

CURLY: What does he mean—'conspikerous'?

LARRY: It's dee-rived from the Latin—"no-conspik-inglish."

Moe gives Larry a dirty look.

MOE: Where did you go to school?

LARRY: Oxford.

MOE: You better go back to high shoes.

The boys put a can of spray and various exterminating implements in their coats as they exit to drawing-room.

39 *MED. FULL SHOT—HALLWAY ENTRANCE TO DRAWING-ROOM*

The boys enter. Mrs. Burlap sees them as she accepts them formally as guests.

MRS. BURLAP: Come right in, gentlemen.

Curly steps forward very proudly, as Moe pulls him back by the coat tail.

MOE: She said gentlemen! Didn't you hear her? Spread out.

The boys exit in different directions as Moe walks behind the settee on which Mrs. Burlap is seated with Stoke-Pogis.

40 *CLOSE SHOT—STOKE-POGIS' FOOT*

A mouse is on his shoe.

41 *MED. FULL SHOT—MRS. BURLAP AND STOKE-POGIS*

He crosses his legs and brings the mouse into view. He is not aware of it, but Mrs. Burlap sees it. She quickly tries to attract Moe's attention, but Moe ducks down behind the couch, having seen something at this point.

STOKE-POGIS: You know, I feel younger than I ever have before.

MRS. BURLAP *(gives a forced laugh)*: How are your reflexes?

She hits Stoke-Pogis on the knee with her fan.

STOKE-POGIS: Fine.

His foot flies forward, kicking the mouse off, over his head—without his ever having seen it.

42 *MED. CLOSE SHOT—MOE*

Looking under settee as the mouse lands on his head. He gets up, puzzled—feels something on his head, as Curly enters, draws a hammer from his coat.

CURLY: Stand still! Stand still!

He swings hammer on Moe's head as mouse leaps. Moe takes a smack, hauls off and hits Curly. He looks off.

43 *MED. CLOSE SHOT*

A gushy débutante talking to a man, as mouse crawls up on her shoulder. She starts to twitch about, as Curly enters; raises hammer to strike; changes his mind and slaps débutante on the back. She turns suddenly. Curly laughs quickly—laughing it off with a big Hello.

CURLY: How are ya, pal? I haven't seen you for a long time.

DEBUTANTE: How dare you!

Her escort steps forward.

ESCORT: Do you know him?

CURLY: Sure she knows me. *(He pinches the girl's cheek.)* How can she ever forget me?

The escort angrily raises his fist to take a poke at Curly, as Moe steps in and grabs his arm.

MOE: I wouldn't do that, friend. You know how dames are.

The girl exits indignantly as Moe elbows Curly in the stomach. Curly takes it. The man turns about to look for the girl, as we see the mouse on the back of his collar. Moe sees it; quickly pulls out the Flit can and gives the mouse a quick spray.

44 *CLOSE SHOT OF MOUSE*

Running down the back of the man's collar, as he turns into CAMERA, surprised.

45 *FULL SHOT*

The man starts to shake all over, as Mrs. Burlap enters.

MRS. BURLAP: Would you care to dance?

She motions to Moe and Curly to beat it.

MAN: Dance?

As dance music starts——

46 *CLOSE SHOT, MAN'S FEET*

As he shakes mouse out of pants leg.

47 *MED. CLOSE SHOT*

Mrs. Burlap sees the mouse on floor and says to man:

MRS. BURLAP: Oh, never mind, we can dance later.

She tries to step on mouse, and exits—trying to stamp on mouse.

48 *CLOSEUP BUFFET*

With drinks and hors d'œuvres, including a plate of cheese. A number of mice are hovering around the cheese, as Larry sneaks up on them. He quickly pulls a net from under his coat, makes a swipe at them. They scatter. He knocks a number of plates off the table, then quickly hides the net under his coat, as he assumes an air of noncha-

lance. A woman quickly turns when she hears the dishes crash.

LARRY: It must've been an earthquake.

WOMAN: I didn't feel anything.

Mrs. Burlap enters and greets the woman. Woman exits with man to dance, as Mrs. Burlap turns to Larry.

MRS. BURLAP: Will you please be less obtrusive and get through as quickly as possible.

Curly enters with a bag of cats over his shoulder—one cat peeking out of the hole in bag.

CURLY *(to Mrs. Burlap)*: Wait till I set these cats loose, you won't have a mouse in the house.

Mrs. Burlap sees the cats and exclaims:

MRS. BURLAP: Great Scott! Hide those cats! Get them out of here!

At this point Lord Stoke-Pogis enters and asks Mrs. Burlap to dance. Larry quickly pulls the cats off Curly's shoulder, hides them behind him and they exit.

49 *CLOSE SHOT AT PIANO*

Larry and Curly enter. They look around for the best spot to dump the cats. Then not knowing what to do, Larry quickly lifts the lid as Curly dumps the cats in the piano and slams the lid shut, just as Moe enters.

MOE *(to Larry)*: Go get the cheese. *(Then to Curly:)* The mice are under that couch. *(Points off.)* Go drive 'em out. I'll be right over there.

CURLY: Okay.

Curly exits.

50 *MED. FULL SHOT AT SETTEE*

Curly enters and starts to peer around. Two people are seated on the settee. Curly gets down and tries to peek under the settee. Unable to see, he slightly raises the woman's dress. She sees him and slaps his hand. As he realizes what he is doing, he apologizes.

CURLY: Pardon me.

51 *MED. FULL SHOT—ENTRANCE BET. LIBRARY AND DRAWING-ROOM*

Moe enters, hammer in hand. He motions to Curly.

52 *MED. FULL SHOT AT SETTEE*

Curly gets down behind the settee, where he jumps up and down, in order to scare out the mice.

53 *CLOSEUP—CORNER OF COUCH*

A lot of mice run out.

54 *MED. FULL SHOT—ENTRANCE BET. LIBRARY AND DRAWING-ROOM*

Moe waiting for the mice to come out. Guests are walking to and fro from each room. Moe sees mice.

55 *CLOSE SHOT, FEET OF GUESTS*

Moe's hammer comes down, as he hits the mice. We see pairs of feet walk by. People let out yells.

56 *FULL SHOT—ENTRANCE BET. LIBRARY AND DRAWING-ROOM*

The guests are jumping up and down, yelling and holding their toes. Moe, seeing what he has done, quickly scampers out.

57 *MED. FULL SHOT BEHIND SETTEE*

Curly jumps up and down, as Moe enters.

CURLY: Did you get 'em?

MOE: I came close.

Larry enters with some cheese; lifts the lid from the box.

58 *REVERSE ANGLE—MED. FULL SHOT*

Guests on settee get the aroma of the cheese. They get up and leave.

59 *CLOSE SHOT OF STOOGES*

LARRY *(to Curly)*: Try this, will you?

He holds up a piece of cheese to Curly; then steps behind him, his arms outstretched, waiting for Curly to fall—but Curly doesn't fall.

LARRY: You all right? Feel dizzy or anything?

CURLY *(chewing on cheese)*: I never felt better in my life.

LARRY *(turning to Moe)*: Guess you didn't put enough rat poison in the cheese.

At this, Curly gulps, spits out the cheese and takes a smack at Larry; misses him and hits Moe, who gives them the double slap. Turning to Moe and pointing to Larry——

CURLY: What does he think I am—a rat?

MOE: Yeh. What about it?

CURLY: Well—don't tell everybody.

60 *MED. FULL SHOT*

Professor at piano. Mrs. Burlap and friend, with Stoke-Pogis are on.

MRS. BURLAP: Ladies and gentlemen—Professor Goober will render the Prelude in C sharp minor.

Goober seated at the piano, takes a quick bow; adjusts the stool and seats himself again.

61 *MED. CLOSE SHOT—STOOGES*

Curly takes it when he hears the announcement and looks at Larry.

MOE: Come on. Sit down and keep quiet.

Apprehensively, Curly and Larry sit down with Moe.

62 *MED. CLOSE SHOT AT PIANO*

The professor raises his hands and is about to start—when the keys start to play of their own accord, accompanied by yowls, meows, and squalls. The professor reacts, astonished, as he repeats his action. He starts to play as we hear a mad scramble inside piano.

63 *CLOSEUP—MRS. BURLAP, HER FRIEND AND LORD STOKE-POGIS*

They look at each other, astonished. Mrs. Burlap knows now where Larry has put the cats.

STOKE-POGIS: My word!

64 *MED. CLOSE SHOT—STOOGES*

Moe hears the cats and turns to Curly.

MOE: Who put those cats in there?

CURLY: Well, you told me to get rid of 'em, didn't you?

Moe gives Curly the double-triple slap as he snatches the net away from Larry and exits.

65 *MED. CLOSE SHOT, PROFESSOR*

He gets to his feet, looks under lid of piano, and several cats leap out. He quickly bangs down the piano lid.

66 *CLOSE TWO SHOT, MOE AND STOKE-POGIS*

One of the cats leaps on Stoke-Pogis' head, as Moe enters with the net, takes a swipe at the cat; pulls it off—with Stoke-Pogis' toupee caught in the cat's claws. Stoke-Pogis quickly grabs toupee and tries to put it on, but puts it on backwards; smilingly tries to regain his composure.

67 *MED. CLOSE SHOT AT PIANO*

Larry and Curly enter. Larry opens lid of piano, reaches in to get the cats, using the stool and keyboard as a ladder. Unable to bend down far enough, Larry turns to Curly.

LARRY: Hold my feet.

As he then reaches way down inside the piano. We hear the banging of piano strings and the howling of cats, inside. Some of them jump out as Larry's feet start to kick and we hear him yelling:

LARRY'S VOICE: Pull me out! Pull me out! They're scratching me!

Moe runs in to help Curly. Both of them yank on Larry's pants—until they come off. Larry slides out of sight into the piano. Curly and Moe quickly leap up on top of piano.

68 *CLOSEUP—CURLY'S AND MOE'S FEET*

Trampling on the keyboard.

69 *MED. FULL SHOT AT PIANO*

Curly and Moe both reach way down for Larry and start pulling him up. Moe hands Larry his pants; he pulls them into piano.

70 *GROUP SHOT*

Mrs. Burlap, Professor, and Stoke-Pogis.

PROFESSOR: This is outrageous! Good-by!

He exits. Mrs. Burlap turns helplessly to Lord Stoke-Pogis.

STOKE-POGIS: What kind of people are those, anyway?

71 *MED. FULL SHOT AT PIANO*

Moe and Curly pull Larry out of piano—all scratched up with wires around his neck and ears. Curly quickly crouches down and starts banging under piano. The rest of the cats leap out and disappear.

72 *MED. SHOT*

Mrs. Burlap, Stoke-Pogis and butler. She turns to Stoke-Pogis.

MRS. BURLAP: Oh, this is terrible—terrible!

Gawkins comes in, carrying a tray. She turns to him:

MRS. BURLAP: Throw those men out!

GAWKINS: Very well, ma'am.

He exits.

73 *MED. FULL SHOT AT PIANO*

The Stooges on. Gawkins comes in to them.

GAWKINS *(politely)*: Will you leave of your own accord—or shall I use force?

MOE: Well, you don't have to get tough about it.

Curly steps forward.

CURLY: Don't talk back!

The butler is surprised, as he hasn't done a darn thing. Moe slaps Curly, as Larry looks down and sees:

INSERT: BUTLER'S FOOT
A mouse on it.

BACK TO SCENE:

Larry grabs a hammer and gives Gawkins a smack on the toe. Gawkins lets out a yell, throws tray in the air and does a high one, grabbing his toe and screaming.

74 *MED. CLOSE SHOT*

Mrs. Burlap and Stoke-Pogis. He takes advantage of the excitement, pulls out a pair of scissors and snips the back of Mrs. Burlap's pearls.

INSERT: PEARLS
They fall to her feet.

75 *MED. FULL SHOT*

Mrs. Burlap and Stoke-Pogis. He picks up the pearls, pockets them, and exits. Mrs. Burlap exits in opposite direction.

76 *MED. FULL SHOT AT PIANO*

Gawkins on floor. Moe turns to Larry.

MOE: What'd you hit him for?

LARRY: Well, I saw a mouse.

And Moe slaps Larry, as Curly says:

CURLY: So did I.

And Moe slaps Curly. Mrs. Burlap enters.

MRS. BURLAP: Will you please get out of my house, or shall I call the police?

MOE: Never mind, lady. We'll go.

MRS. BURLAP: This way, please.

She exits, followed by the Stooges. Moe is giving Larry and Curly hell as they exit. They come to archway leading to hall, as Mrs. Burlap suddenly discovers the absence of her pearls. She turns quickly on the boys.

MRS. BURLAP: Just a minute: Which one of you stole my pearls? I'll give you exactly five minutes to return them to me, or I'll call the police.

CURLY: The dame's crazy. What's she talkin' about?

Mrs. Burlap exits toward telephone.

77 *CLOSEUP AT PHONE*

As Mrs. Burlap comes in and picks up receiver.

MRS. BURLAP: Give me the police station——

78 *THREE SHOT—THE STOOGES*

MOE: There's a crook in the house.

CURLY: Yeh—a rat.

MOE: We can catch rats just as well as mice. *(Turning to Larry.)* Get the ants.

Larry exits through library drapes, upstage.

CURLY: Who do you suspect?

MOE: I'll soon find out!

79 *CLOSE SHOT MRS. BURLAP*

As she speaks into telephone.

MRS. BURLAP: Hello, hello—operator!

She lifts the phone and we see the wire is cut.

MRS. BURLAP: Ah-ha! They've cut the wire.

80 *MED. SHOT AT CURTAINS*

Curly and Moe are on, as Larry peeks through from library and shows Moe the ants. Moe motions him back; then looks suspiciously at a man near him. As the man turns, Moe says to him secretively:

MOE: Would you like to see these?

He pulls out some postcards and shows one to the man. Man takes it, very interested as Moe motions with his head.

MOE: Follow me——

Moe exits through curtain; man follows him

81 *OTHER SIDE CURTAINS—IN LIBRARY*

Moe and man enter. Man looks at rest of postcards and laughs as Moe signals to Larry to give him ants. Larry sprays them on back of man's neck. He stops laughing, starts scratching; starts taking clothes off—first his coat. Moe quickly looks in coat pockets. Curly runs in.

MOE *(to Curly)*: Look through his pants.

Moe exits.

82 *LIBRARY AT CURTAINS*

A group of men are standing there as Moe enters; shows them postcards. They follow him into library.

83 *CURTAINS. OTHER SIDE IN LIBRARY*

Men enter; pass postcards to each other, laughing. And Larry gives them ants, in rapid succession. They get itchy and start to take off clothes. Moe exits.

84 *OTHER SIDE OF CURTAINS*

Moe comes through, just as Gawkins enters, limping. Moe sees him.

MOE: May I see you privately for a moment, please?

GAWKINS: Certainly.

Moe exits through curtains, followed by Gawkins.

85 *FULL SHOT OF LIBRARY*

Men have their clothes off and are in long underwear, scratching, as Larry and Curly go through their clothes. Gawkins sees this and exclaims.

GAWKINS: What on earth has happened?

Moe gives Larry the high sign, and Larry shoots ants on Gawkins. He starts to scratch, also remove his clothes.

86 *HALLWAY ENTRANCE TO LIVING ROOM*

Mrs. Burlap and lady friend enter. Mrs. Burlap calls:

MRS. BURLAP: Gawkins! Gawkins! Where are you?

87 *MED. FULL SHOT OF LIBRARY*

Gawkins is undressed, scratching with the rest of the men, as the boys look through his clothes. Gawkins comes to attention.

GAWKINS: I'll be right out, ma'am.

Mrs. Burlap enters with her friend, through curtains. They both look on, astounded.

88 *REVERSE CLOSEUP, GAWKINS*

He sees Mrs. Burlap—takes it big.

89 *CLOSEUP, MRS. BURLAP AND FRIEND*

Mrs. Burlap faints in her friend's arms. She drags her out of scene.

90 *MED. SHOT DRAWING-ROOM*

Mrs. Burlap and friend come in through drapes. Mrs. Burlap falls into armchair, as many women guests enter.

WOMEN: Have you seen our husbands? etc., etc.

MRS. B.'S FRIEND: Yes—er—no——

WOMEN: I wonder where they are?

One woman starts into library, as Mrs. Burlap's friend tries to prevent her, but she is brushed aside as other women exit.

91 *MED. FULL SHOT LIBRARY*

Men on, undressed. Women enter, see their husbands, who scatter in all directions.

92 *MED. CLOSE SHOT*

Of the women. Horror-stricken, they retreat.

93 *CLOSEUP STOOGES*

Looking through men's clothes. As they look up——

MOE: That's all the men there are. The thief must be a woman.

Mrs. Burlap's friend enters.

MRS. B.'S FRIEND: Haven't you caused trouble enough already?

Moe gives Larry the high sign, and he douses the back of her low-cut gown with ants. She takes it; as she starts to unfasten her dress, three husky men enter with overcoats on, grab the Stooges and hustle them off.

94 *EXT. HOUSE*

As the Stooges come flying out in quick succession.

95 *CLOSEUP—STOOGES*

CURLY: I guess we're all washed up now. The boss won't believe what happened.

LARRY: We can make more money in the fox-hunting racket, anyway. Why bother with rodents?

MOE: That's an idea——

WIPE OFF TO:

96 *STOCK SHOT—FOX HUNT*

In which a number of people and dogs are chasing the fox over a meadow, accompanied by the sound of horses' hoofs and yelping of dogs.

97 *FULL SHOT—EXT. MEADOW*

Moe is riding a sway-backed horse; Larry a donkey, and Curly a bicycle. They all pull into a clearing and stop momentarily to look around.

98 *CLOSEUP CURLY*

He sneezes, takes out a handkerchief and blows his nose. It sounds like a Bugle.

99 *CLOSE TWO SHOT, MOE AND LARRY*

LARRY: Didja hear that trumpet? They must've located the fox!

100 *CLOSEUP CURLY*

Hearing this, he looks around and sees:

101 *CLOSEUP, A SKUNK*

coming out from behind a bush, where it stops to look.

102 *MED. SHOT*

Curly turns and speaks to Moe and Larry.

CURLY: I see a fox!

He sneezes, exits with a sack in his hand. PAN WITH HIM as he runs to skunk and, getting down on his one knee, calls gently:

Come, foxy, foxy, foxy——

The skunk takes one look at him and starts to run. Curly runs after it, leaps on top of it, picks it up, and puts it in the sack, and exits.

103 *MED. FULL SHOT, CLEARING*

Moe and Larry are on, looking around, as Curly runs in.

CURLY: I got hib!

He sneezes again, holds the sack up close to head of Moe's horse—which does a pass-out. Moe and Larry see what happened; they grab their noses and yell.

MOE & LARRY: YOU SURE DID!

They run out, leaving Curly wondering as he looks into the sack, still puzzled.

FADE OUT.

THE END.

THE OREGON TRAIL

A Republic picture, with John Wayne and Ann Rutherford.

(See the March MOVIE ACTION MAGAZINE for the full fictionized story of this picture.)

John Wayne is fast becoming one of the best-liked Western stars, because he hasn't fallen into the rut of routine cowboy pictures. Here he is the captain of a troop of cavalry in 1835. We get an insight into the activity of the U. S. Army during those pioneer days. This is a stirring adventure picture with its struggles to keep the West safe.

WE DOFF OUR SOMBREROS TO MR. WAYNE. GIVE US A LOT MORE LIKE THIS ONE.

THE MYSTERIOUS AVENGER ◆ ◆ ◆

The Code of the West left Ranny no choice. His father was shot—and someone must die!

RANNY MAITLAND rode out of the darkness of the wash trail onto the grounds of the Lockart ranch. He rode slowly, his lean face tense and every nerve alert. In the shadowy darkness around the corral, he saw a number of horses and rigs. From the big barn to his right came the sound of music and laughter.

At the corral he jumped to the ground, tied his horse and turned to look at the big barn. A form moved away from it, disappearing into the night. Ranny wet his lips, and walked toward the building, hands resting on the six guns at his belt.

Three men stood in the doorway as he entered. One was tall, with a thin face and small, shifty eyes. Those eyes bored into Ranny—curiously and suspiciously.

"Could you tell me where I'll find Mr. Lockart?" Ranny asked him.

The man's face remained expressionless as he answered: "He's inside. Come with me."

Ranny followed him inside. He saw he had walked into a barn dance. Three fiddlers sat on an improvised platform and part of the crowd were dancing, while others stood at the side, clapping hands to keep time with the music.

"This is Mr. Lockart," Ranny's guide said as they walked up to an elderly man, with the bearing and looks of a successful cattleman. Lockart had honesty and high character stamped on his every feature.

Ranny looked at him, his eyes registering amazement. In the strange and grim rôle he was playing, he had not expected to find Lockart the type of man he saw now.

IN Ranny's pocket was a letter from his father, received a week before at the Ranger's Station far to the south of the Lockart Ranch.

The letter read:

MY DEAR SON:

If you can, I wish you'd come to Medicine Springs. I need help and

THE CAST

CHARLES STARRETT	Ranny
Edward Le Saint	Lockart
Joan Perry	Alice
Charles Locher	Lafe
Wheeler Oakman	Brophy

Story by Peter B. Kyne.
Screenplay by Ford Bebe.
Directed by David Selman.

A fictionization of the Columbia picture of the same title.

> I need it bad! My neighbor, named Lockart, is robbing me blind. It's nearing a show-down and I need some one I can trust. Dad.

Ranny had gone to his captain, intending to ask for a leave of absence to visit his father, whom he had not seen for years. Instead, the captain had greeted him with the information that he was planning to send him to Medicine Springs to act as an undercover man to discover evidence of a gigantic rustling ring working that section.

And the request had come from Lockart himself, naming Ranny's father as the man behind that ring!

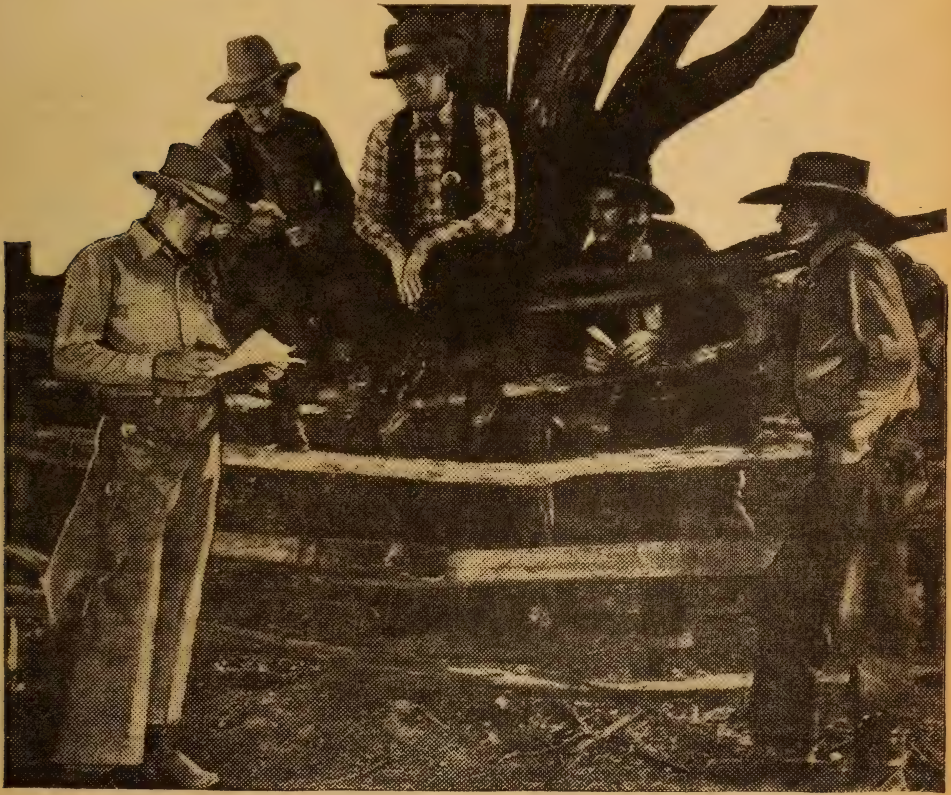
Ranny had made no mention of the letter from his father. He had accepted the assignment, hoping he would have a chance to explain everything to his father the moment he saw him.

He had ridden to Medicine Springs, fully convinced that Lockart was the brains behind the rustling gang. But looking at the man, Ranny knew at once that he was far removed from such a thing.

"MY name is Morgan," Ranny lied to Lockart. "A friend of your suggested I drop in—but it seems I've picked a bad time."

"Not by a jugful!" Lockart said with a friendly laugh. "You're just in time to help celebrate my daughter's birthday."

For the first time, Ranny was conscious of a pretty girl standing near Lockart. He introduced her as his



A letter from his father read, "I need help, and need it bad."

daughter, Alice. Then he introduced his foreman and the sheriff.

Ranny acknowledged the introduction to Alice with obvious embarrassment. The introduction to Brophy, the foreman, was different. Brophy was the man who had guided Ranny to Lockart, and Ranny knew instinctively that he was a man he would never like or trust. The sheriff was friendly and shook the young Ranger's hand cordially.

"By the way," Lockart questioned, "who was the friend of mine that told you to drop in?"

"Dan Thomas—down Del Rio way," Ranny answered, shooting Lockart a quick look. He wondered if he would recognize the Ranger captain's name.

For a moment Lockart studied Ranny's face closely, and then, with a booming laugh, said:

"Old Dan Thomas! Any friend of his is welcome here. But come over here and tell me about that old rascal!"

WHILE Ranny and Lockart talked, a lone rider moved along the line of ponies and rigs at the corral. Deliberate and unhurried, the man dismounted, tied his horse, and started for the barn.

Brophy standing in the doorway, saw him. His body stiffened and his right hand pawed for his gun. But every man had been required to deposit his gun on a table before the dancing. Brophy's clawing fingers found no cold steel in his holster.

With lightning speed, he turned, ran into the barn, up to where Ranny and Lockart were standing.

"Old Man Maitland just rode up outside!" Brophy announced to Lockart. "He's comin' in!"

The sound of Brophy's voice carried beyond Lockart and Ranny. The music was suddenly stilled. The rumble of conversation ceased abruptly. Alice ran up to her father, her eyes giving him a pleading look.

The friendliness of the rancher's face left. Hard and cold lines formed around his mouth. Then he was conscious, as was every one in that great room, that a white-haired old cattleman, with a finely featured face, was standing in the doorway, surveying the assembly with a smile.

"Evenin', Lockart," he said easily.

"Stop where you are, Maitland!" Lockart ordered. "If it wasn't for this party, you couldn't have got within a mile of my ranch without being shot off your horse!"

"SORRY, Lem," Maitland answered. "I've got business with you—and it's not war."

The old man reached for his six-gun, pulling it from his holster by the barrel, showing that he was on a peaceful mission. But as he did this, his eyes fell on his son, standing near Lockart. Maitland stared at Ranny in sudden amazement, but in that deadly second, Ranny moved his head almost imperceptibly, flashing a signal to his father not to give him away.

Maitland caught the signal and smiled as he handed Ranny his gun. But Lockart suggested that they go to the house to talk, each taking their guns.

The crowd stared in amazement at this. The sheriff protested violently, but Lockart waved aside the protest, giving his word that nothing would happen.

Lockart did not bother to go to the table for his gun. He motioned Ranny for his weapon. Ranny slipped his gun belt off and gave it to him. At the same time, he handed his father's back to him.

The two cattlemen walked out of the barn. Somebody called a dance. Ranny turned to Alice and took her for a partner. They danced in silence for several minutes.

"I reckon I'd better trail along," he finally said to her, "and keep an eye on things."

"Please don't," Alice pleaded. "You

may spoil everything. Down in their hearts they really like each other. If we leave them alone, they may get this silly quarrel patched up."

ALICE'S words were cut short with the roar of a gun, from the direction of the house! The music stopped. Men looked at each other, and then made a dive for the table holding their six-guns.

A second shot from the same direction brought Ranny to his senses. With a running leap, he was through the door of the barn. He landed outside and raced through the darkness for the ranch house.

There was no light showing through any window. He crashed through the kitchen door, stumbled over a chair, and went through a second door into the living room.

He struck a match, touched it to a lamp on a table. The lamp flickered, threw out a yellow light, which slowly increased in strength. As Ranny turned, looked down at the floor, every part of his body became rigid and his eyes filled with pain.

Lying on the floor was his father, with a wound over his heart and one in his head!

Ranny stared down at the lifeless body, stunned and unable to move. He heard the sheriff at his side gasp that Maitland was dead. Then he heard some one suggest that the body be taken to another room.

Ranny heard Alice give a cry behind him as she gasped: "What happened? Where's dad?"

"Maitland's dead—and your father's gone!" the sheriff answered.

A YOUNG man, barely more than a boy, pushed his way into the room. He was Lafe Lockart, Alice's brother.

"Are you tryin' to say that dad did it and ran?" he demanded of the sheriff.

The sheriff looked at his gun and saw it had been fired twice.

"What would *you* think?" Ranny demanded, eying the young man coldly, "if it was your father dead—and Mr. Maitland that was gone?"

"That'd be different. Maitland was a——"

"Don't say it!" Ranny interrupted angrily.

But he caught himself before he said more. The irony of his position flashed on him. Nobody in that room knew he was a Ranger, or Maitland's son. They all believed him to be a man named Morgan, and only Lockart knew the truth about his mission.

Without warning, a door swung open and Lockart staggered into the room, his face pale and blood on his forehead. He stared at the crowd in amazement.

"Who did it, dad?" Lafe cried. "Maitland's been killed."

"I don't know," his father answered. "Maitland came here to-night to tell me who's stealing our stock. He was about to name them when some one opened this door behind me and shot. The lights went out. I ran into the room after the man. Something hit me on the head and —and I just came to."

HIS story did not impress the sheriff. He demanded Lockart's gun. He looked at it and saw that it had been fired twice.

"That—that—is impossible," Lockart protested. "I didn't fire my gun. Maybe the killer traded guns with me after I dropped——"

"That will be pretty hard to prove," the sheriff answered.

"No, it won't," Lafe cried eagerly. "Dad had Mr. Morgan's gun! Mr. Morgan can tell whether this is his gun or not."

Ranny took the gun, looked at it, but shook his head, explaining that there was nothing to distinguish it from another of the same model.

"That don't leave me any choice, Lem," the sheriff said to Lockart. "I'll have to take you!"

But before the sheriff could make a move, young Lafe had yanked his guns out and had covered the crowd. He yelled to his father to make a break, but his father smiled wearily, walked over to him and took his guns and handed them to Ranny.

"I wish you'd help Lafe run things while I'm away," he said to Ranny. Then to the sheriff he added: "If you don't mind, sheriff, I'd like to speak to Mr. Morgan alone."

The sheriff looked at the crowd and then at Lockart. He nodded agreement and the crowd filed out of the room.

"BEFORE Maitland was shot, he told me one thing I want you to know," Lockart said to Ranny.

"What's that?" Ranny asked curiously.

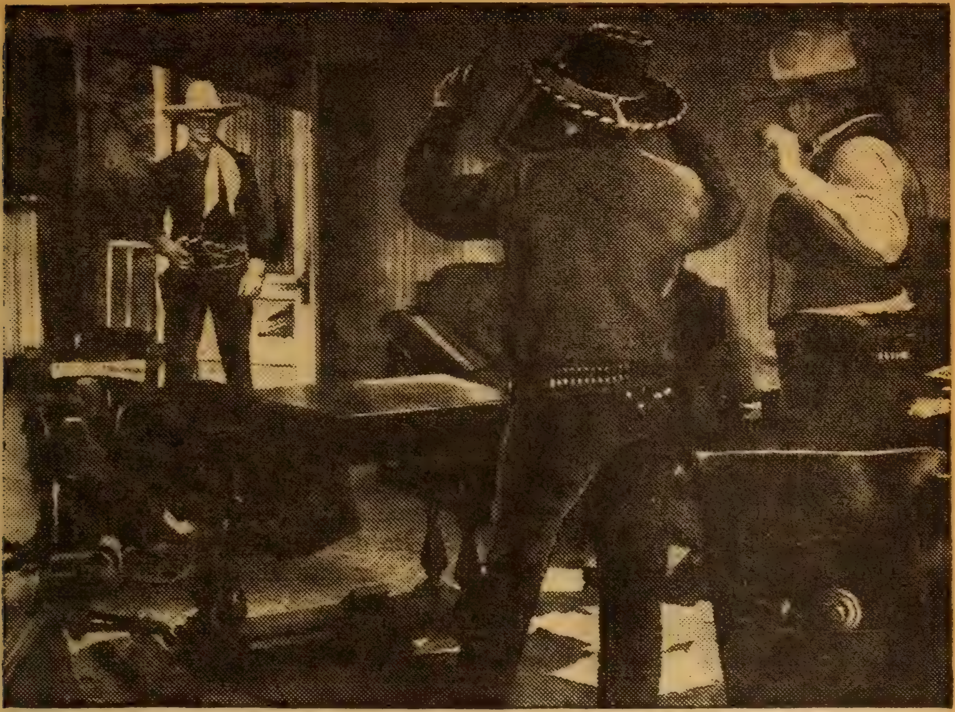
"He told me you were his son," Lockart replied, taking Ranny's hand. "I want you to know that your father and I were friends. I never believed he stole my cattle and he never believed I stole his. We were just old fools, but before he died, we fixed that up. I am as much interested in finding the killer as you, son—and good luck!"

"Thanks," Ranny said hoarsely. "It's not going to be easy. We'd better not tell even the sheriff who I am."

AN hour later the crowd that had gathered for the barn dance had left, and over the barn, the ranch house and other buildings fell the stillness of a soundless night. Lockart had been taken to jail. Alice had gone to her rooms.

On the far side of the ranch house, Ranny crouched in the shadows of the buildings, his eyes piercing the darkness that was no longer relieved by moonlight. Lafe was at his side, his young face pale and tensed.

For nearly an hour they had crouched there, his eyes staring into the darkness. Lafe tried to engage Ranny in conversation. He insisted that Ranny knew whether the gun taken from Lockart was



"Drop your guns and get away from that safe!"

his or not. But Ranny merely answered by saying he would know in a little while.

Then suddenly the darkness ahead of them moved!

A figure came out of the house, running for a clump of brush behind the corral. At the brush, the man dropped to his hands and knees, fumbling among the shrubs.

"It's Brophy!" Lafe gasped. "What's he doing?"

"Trying to find the gun he threw away," Ranny answered in a whisper.

Brophy apparently found what he wanted. He rose to his feet. Something dark was in his hand as he turned and disappeared into the night.

"He's getting away!"

"Let him go," Ranny murmured. "There's more than one man in this—and our job is to get 'em all. We can prove Brophy got the gun when the time comes."

"But you suspected Brophy?" Lafe questioned.

"Naturally," Ranny replied. "When he left the barn he was wearing a gun. When I saw him in the room where Maitland was murdered, he didn't have one. You get some sleep now. When dawn breaks I'm riding to town to get some information from your dad."

IN town, Ranny got little additional information from Lockart. The rancher repeated his conversation with Maitland. He added, however, that Maitland told him he had evidence in the safe in his ranch that would prove his statement.

Ranny left town over a trail that led to the Maitland ranch. A strange feeling came over him as his horse started down the slope that led into the valley that had been his father's home, a home Ranny had never known as his father had moved there after he joined the Rangers.

But as Ranny rode over the crest of the hill, two horsemen on the hill opposite disappeared, riding down a back trail that led to the Maitland ranch house.

Ranny did not see them. He was busy trying to piece together the strange events of the murder of his father. Puzzling as it seemed to him, there was one element that held no mystery. That was the fact that he was sure he was riding into a death trap as he went down that hill into the valley where his father's ranch was located!

Whoever was behind the gang of rustlers was playing a dangerous game. One man had been killed and Ranny knew the minute it was known that he was a Ranger, his life would be snuffed out as quickly as his father's!

HE crossed a small stream and rode up to the house, a low, rambling building, with a porch running the length of the front part. Ranny approached the front of the house, his sixth sense telling him that the silence hanging over the house was filled with danger.

He stopped in front of the house and started to dismount, but as he did, it seemed that the very bowels of the earth burst up in his face. There was a terrific explosion. The concussion of the explosion sent Ranny to the ground, his senses whirling in every direction.

He hit the ground with a heavy thud. For a split second the darkness of unconsciousness hovered over him. But it did not close in on him and his brain cleared slowly. He got to his feet, swaying weakly. He blinked at what he saw.

The ranch house was in front of him, but the walls were blown out and not a pane of glass remained in the windows. A foglike smoke was drifting through the broken windows. He shook his head to gather his thoughts, then he walked up on the broken porch and through the front doorway.

Inside the house, he stopped abruptly. Two men were kneeling before a safe that had been blown open. One of these was Brophy. The other was Gilman, the foreman of the Maitland ranch. Brophy was pawing hurriedly through the papers that had been blown from the safe.

"IS this a private snooping party," Ranny asked quietly, "or can any one get in it?"

The men whirled. Gilman's gun streaked out of the leather. Ranny's gun roared and Gilman's flew out of his hand as the foreman clutched his wrist, his face writhing in pain.

"Serves you right, you fool!" Brophy said to Gilman. "Come on in, Morgan! I guess we're all here for the same purpose."

"Maybe so," Ranny replied coldly. "Drop your guns and get away from the safe."

Brophy got to his feet, dropped his gun. Gilman was still holding his wrist.

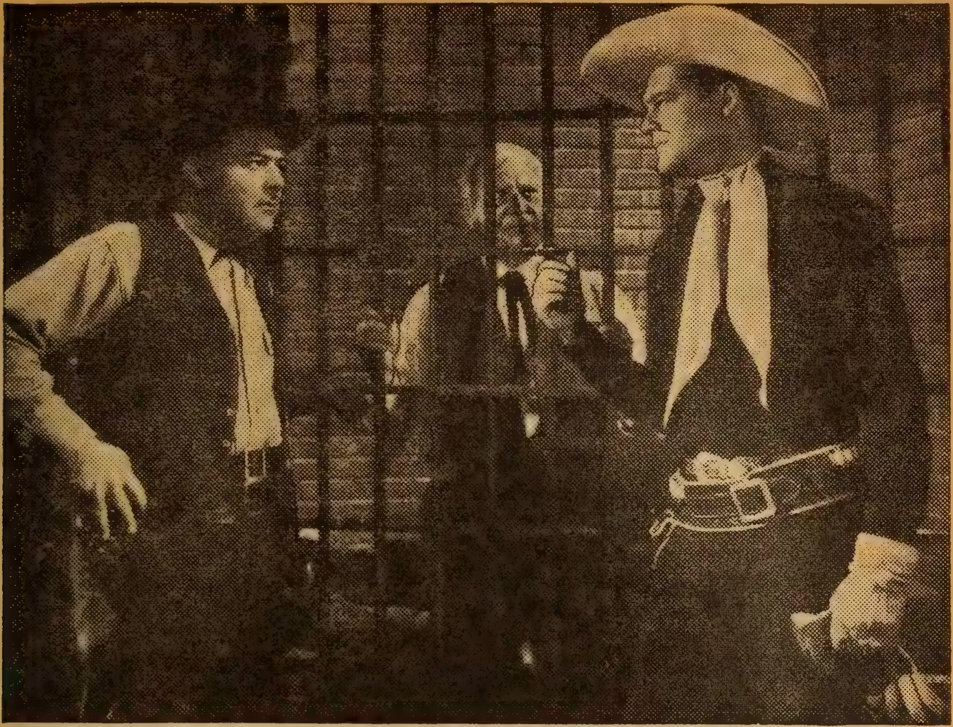
"I reckon this looks sorta funny, Morgan," Brophy explained. "Me being foreman of the Lockart outfit. But the truth is I'm on Maitland's pay roll. Gilman and I have been workin' together helpin' trail down the killers."

Ranny smiled coldly. The brazenness of Brophy was startling. The story was good—too good to disprove, now that Ranny's father was dead!

"How does robbing the safe fit into the story?" Ranny asked.

"I knew there was evidence in the safe," Brophy answered easily. "I wanted to turn it over to the law before the Lockarts got it."

Ranny walked to the safe and went through the papers. He found a number of squares of cowhide, Cross-in-a-box brands.



The sheriff shook his head. He couldn't let a man charged with murder out of jail!

"If you look closer," Brophy said, "you'll see they've been raised from Maitland's straight M brand. I reckon that letter there will explain things."

Ranny picked up a letter and read:

Dear Mr. Maitland:

The Cross-in-a-box brand you inquired about is registered in the name of Lafe Lockart.

James McCormick,
Registrar.

THE muscles in Ranny's face tightened. He looked at Brophy and said: "It doesn't look very good for the kid, does it?"

There was a commotion at the door and two men dragged Lafe Lockart into the room.

"We found this man prowling around the place," one of the men said to Brophy. "What'll we do with him?"

"Turn him over to the law," Brophy said. "I guess he was after the letter you've got, Morgan. But I beat him to it."

Lafe looked at Ranny with bewildered eyes. Ranny handed him the letter and said nothing.

"This is a lie!" Lafe cried. "I never registered any brand. Why don't you arrest Brophy for killing Mr. Maitland? We saw him sneak out and get the gun and——"

Brophy laughed easily.

"I guess I can admit that," he said. "I went out to get it because I saw Lafe Lockart throw it there after his father shot Maitland. I was afraid Lafe would do something like that. I saw him sneak out of the barn when his father and

Maitland left. I trailed after him, but Lockart shot Old Man Maitland before I could do anything. Then I saw Lafe throw the gun in the bush."

"Why didn't you say something about this at the house?" Ranny asked.

"I didn't know what he threw in the shrubs until I went out there and found it," Brophy replied.

"All right, Lafe," Ranny said wearily. "I guess you'd better come with me to the sheriff."

As Ranny and Lafe walked out to their horses, Gilman looked at Brophy, who winked back and said: "As soon as they get started, trail 'em. If anything goes wrong, you know what to do."

"We sure got out of that pretty slick," Gilman laughed.

"We're not out of it yet," Brophy answered. "That man Morgan is a Ranger—and he's no fool!"

ALICE was at the jail when Ranny rode up with Lafe. She greeted him with profuse thanks for all he had tried to do for her father; but Lafe broke in with a sneer, announcing that he was under arrest for rustling.

Lockart looked at Ranny, stunned by the news. The sheriff said: "Is this some sort of a joke, Morgan?"

Alice turned on Ranny angrily. "And you're the man we counted on to help us out of our trouble!" she exclaimed in sudden bitterness.

Then, without giving Ranny a chance to explain, she turned and ran out of the door.

Ranny handed Lockart the letter from the registrar without comment. Lockart read it in amazement.

"You don't believe I did it?" Lafe demanded of his father.

"I don't, son," Lockart replied. "I can't explain this letter, though."

"You don't have to," Ranny said. "He's not guilty. Look at these brand hides I found in the safe. Your brand's an hour glass, Mr. Lockart. These brands here were originally an hour glass before they were altered—not the M brand Brophy tried to make me believe. Lafe wouldn't rob his own ranch."

"I reckon not," the sheriff said dubiously, "but that don't prove anything."

"We can prove it by finding the real rustlers!" Ranny cried. "If they haven't shipped their last stolen cattle, we still have a chance!"

Without another word of explanation, Ranny walked out of the jail and to the telegraph office. He hurriedly wrote a message, handed it to the operator, with instructions that the answer be delivered to him at once.

THE answer came two hours later. It read:

RANCE MORGAN
MEDICINE SPRINGS TEXAS
LAFE LOCKART ORDERED CATTLE CARS
DELIVERED BLOCKADE CANYON SIDING
TENTH THIS MONTH
JAMES WHITSON
DIVISION SUPT R L & A R R

"The tenth is to-morrow," the sheriff commented. "We'll have a posse at Blockade Canyon——"

"And the rustlers won't come in a mile of it," Ranny cut in. "You're going to get a posse—but we'll make the rustlers think it's for a different reason. You're going to have a jail break. Lockart and his son will escape and the posse will start out after them. But they'll wind up in Blockade Canyon——"

The sheriff looked at him and shook his head. He couldn't let a man charged with murder and one with rustling out of jail!

Ranny smiled and assured him he would have nothing to do with the jail break and that he, as a Ranger and an officer of the law, would vouch for the prisoners' safe return.

But while Ranny and the sheriff talked,

Gilman was racing out to the Maitland ranch with news for Brophy.

"Better try not to move them steers to-morrow, boss!" Gilman cried. "That Ranger knows all about them. He wired the railroad. I sneaked up to the jail and heard them planning a fake jail break. Lockart and Lafe are getting out and a posse will be formed to get them, but this posse will raid the canyon. We better beat it out of the country."

"It's too late to run," Brophy said. "Besides, I got a little plan that will get us out from under—and put the Lockarts where we want them!"

THE next morning the quiet of the cow-town was broken by the wild yells of the sheriff and the thunder of his guns firing in the air.

"The prisoners are gone!" he yelled. "There's been a jail break."

While the town came to life with men running for their horses to form a posse, Lockart and Lafe sat in the kitchen of their ranch house, looking silently at the remains of breakfast. They didn't hear the soft sound of a footstep at the door. They heard nothing until the door opened and Brophy stood there, six-guns leveled at them.

"I heard there was a jail break," sneered Brophy. "I thought I'd come out and collect the reward."

Outside Alice had ridden up to the ranch house. She ran to the window, peered inside, her face going a deathly pale. She saw Brophy covering her father and brother. She turned and ran back to her horse, leaped in the saddle, and rode away.

OUT at an isolated building, near Blockade Canyon, Ranny waited for the

Ranny was on him again, sending lefts to the jaw.

posse to appear. It was already over an hour late. The sound of horse's hoofs caused him to turn quickly. Alice rode up to the building, leaping to the ground.

She started to tell about what she had seen in the kitchen, but from the canyon came the cry: "Hey, Mo-o-organ!"

Ranny walked around the building, and looked into the barrels of three six-guns, held in the hands of Brophy and two henchmen. And with them were Lockart and Lafe bound hand and foot!

"Drop your gun and come here!" Brophy ordered.

Behind Ranny and out of sight of Brophy stood Alice. "Toss it where I can get it," she whispered to Ranny.

"Not a chance," Ranny whispered back. "Get out of here—or you'll get killed!"

Alice disappeared inside the building. Ranny walked up to Brophy and his men.

"You don't seem glad to see us," Brophy laughed. "We brought you the prisoners that broke jail. You ought to be mighty glad that we brought you the man who killed your father."

"So you know I'm Maitland's son?" Ranny shot back. "That's interesting because it proves that you killed my father! You were behind the door when you heard him tell Lockart that! Nobody else knew it! Don't forget that, Lockart!"

"He ain't going to forget nothin'," Brophy sneered. "He ain't living long enough for that. Guess why I brought them here? They're going to be caught drivin' that herd of rustled cattle! You and me are going to catch them. There'll be a stampede and a gun battle. After the battle there won't be any one left but me and my men. *Nobody to do any talking!*"

BROPHY ordered Gilman to take Lockart and Lafe off the horses.

"Get them out of sight and keep the Ranger covered," he said. "I'll start the stampede."

Gilman pulled the two Lockarts from their horses and dragged them in the building. He leaped back suddenly, sent his fist out sharply and Alice, who had been hiding behind the door, went to the ground in a crumpled heap, a gun in her hand.

"Maybe you thought I was too big a fool to know you were here," Gilman sneered at the unconscious girl. "We saw all that when we rode up. Now you——"

He never finished that sentence. Ranny had twisted to the right and then his body went hurtling through the air at Gilman. Two guns roared. Bullets clipped Ranny's clothes. His shoulders hit Gilman and sent him to the ground, the gun falling from his left hand.

Ranny leaped for the gun. Gilman came up, a gun in his right hand. His bandaged wrist made the move slow. The gun in Ranny's hand roared and Gilman screamed, grabbing his wrist a second time.

THERE was a terrific explosion behind Ranny. A stinging, burning sensation shot down his left shoulder. He swerved. Another bullet caught him in the flesh of the leg. He went to the ground with a thud. Two bullets clipped the dust at his head. His gun came up, roared twice and one of the men with Brophy toppled to the ground.

With a supreme effort, his left side numb and his right leg filled with hell-fire, Ranny came up on his toes, thankful that no bones had been broken in his body.

His gun roared. Brophy ducked and as he did, Ranny leaped for the neck of his horse, which was close to him as Brophy had ridden up to give the death shot to the Ranger.

Ranny's arms went around the neck of the horse. It was a foolish, absurd chance, but any chance was better than the certain death that faced him on the ground. With a frantic effort he swung himself up, his legs swinging in a flashing arc over the horse's back. His heels caught Brophy across the face, knocking him to the ground.

He fell with a vile curse, Ranny released his grip on the horse's neck and fell to the ground, coming down on the struggling rustler. Brophy threw him to one side with a bellowing curse, but as he did, Ranny caught him by the foot and twisted it around with all the strength left in his arms.

Brophy screamed from pain. Ranny was on him again, sending rights to his jaw. The blows landed with feeble force. Ranny's head was spinning crazily.

He could hear Lockart yelling encouragement to him, but the rancher and his son were bound too tightly to even crawl out to Ranny. Brophy's fist caught Ranny on the side of the head, sending him to the ground in an inert heap. Everything was turning crazily in front of Ranny's eyes.

He saw Brophy jump to his feet, reach for his gun which lay on the ground. Ranny saw this gun come up. Ranny moved. His hands went out and caught Brophy by the ankles. He pulled them toward him and Brophy's gun roared as he crashed to the ground.

Then Ranny heard the sound of yelling men and racing horses. "Brophy's gang coming to help him," was the thought that seared through Ranny's numbed mind! He tried to pull himself off the ground, but he fell back helpless—unconscious.

WHEN he came to, men were talking over him. He tried to think but his mind was a mass of distorted thoughts. He opened his eyes. Something like a grin came to his face.

Standing over him was Lockart and near him was the sheriff.

"Son," Lockart said hoarsely, "you did the trick! You stood Brophy off until the posse arrived! I didn't think you could do it with those wounds. But you did, and the posse has Gilman and Brophy and they found the cattle in the canyon, guarded by Brophy's men!"

"I guess there ain't much question now who killed your father, son," the sheriff said. "We got you and Alice and Lafe and Lockart who heard Brophy practically admit he fired the shot when you called him on knowing you were Maitland's son. This and the cattle is all we need."

"Those men we caught with the cattle," Lafe added, "are willing to talk to save their necks. I guess I acted the fool all along, Maitland, but I want to tell you how sorry I am."

Ranny struggled to sit up. His eyes went beyond Lockart, the sheriff, and Lafe. They rested on Alice, who was standing near by, looking at him.

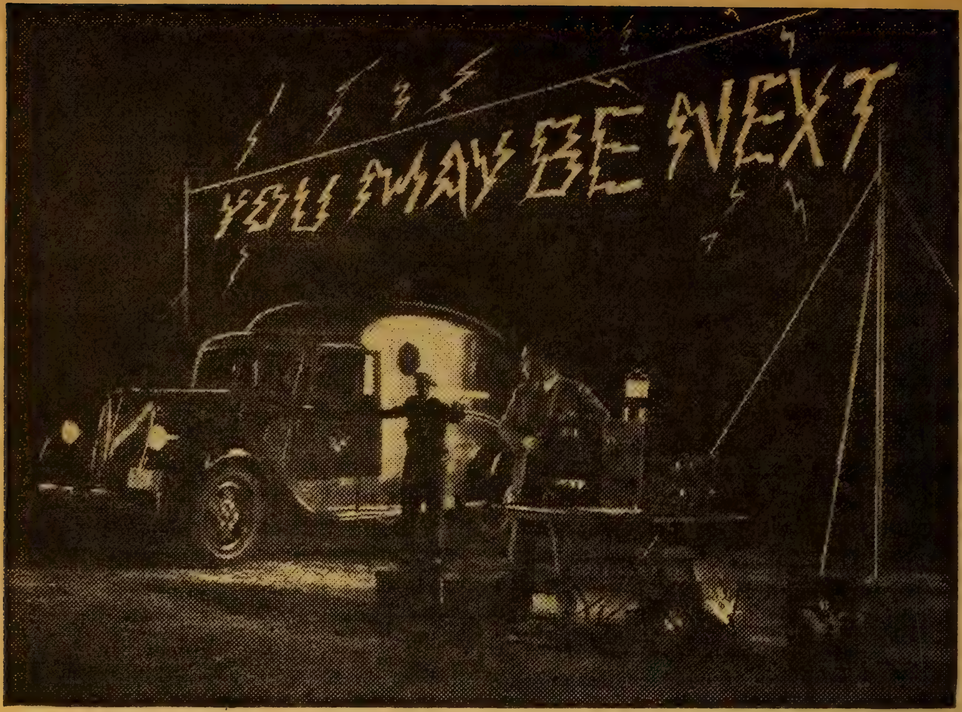
"I can't ever tell you how sorry I am," she said to Ranny. "The way I acted—and all the time you were trying to help us. I—I suppose—you will be leaving now?"

Ranny grinned weakly. "Well, I was sorta hoping you'd ask me to stay—for supper, anyway. I'm—hungry."

"Stay for supper," Alice said, dropping to his side and taking his head in her arms. "You're welcome to stay forever—and I'm not ashamed to say it with dad and Lafe and the sheriff looking on!"

"Ashamed?" Lockart said. "Maitland was the best friend I ever had and he died trying to help me. I hope his son will be more than a friend!"

"So do I," Ranny replied weakly, but with a real meaning as he looked into the tenderness of Alice's eyes.



Neil was Mr. Average Citizen, honest and industrious. How could he be used to bring about the most daring hi-jacking plot in the history of crime? Read this and find out!

THE powerful gasoline lamp struck weird gleams and shadows from the panels of the portable radio transmitter. In front of the banked switches and dials, Neil Bennett, ace field technician of the American Broadcasting Corporation, bent over his hand mike as unconcernedly as if he were back in his own laboratory in the ABC Building, instead of in the middle of a very dark, very lonely Long Island meadow.

Forty feet above the wiry young expert's head, the portable testing mast lost itself in the upper blackness. There were no sounds save a faint, steady hum from the transmitter, and the distant, spasmodic squawking of auto horns on the North Shore Highway, three miles away.

For a moment, Bennett made swift, incisive notes in the notebook that he balanced with practiced ease on his knee. Then he shifted his attention to the instrument panels, threw a switch, adjusted a dial with delicate care. The earphones clamped to his sorrel-thatched head hummed softly as he moved onto the wavelength he was seeking. He dropped his mouth to the mike, said sharply, "Eddie! Hey! Eddie! Wake up, will you!"

The only answer was a rhythmic note that rose to a burbling crescendo, checked suddenly, rose again. Neil Bennett grinned. He was on the right wavelength now. No other sound on earth had quite the quality of Eddie House's snore.

Bennett stuck the mike fairly against his face, yelled, "Eddie! Wake up!"

There was a gasp in the earphones, a muffled exclamation. Five miles away Neil's assistant, Eddie House, had stopped snoring into the open microphone of the ABC field transmitting truck, and got back on the job.

Neil Bennett said crisply, "It's about time! Are we testing this area, or aren't we?"

Eddie's hurt tones came over the air. "Aw, now, Neil. I wasn't asleep."

Bennett said wearily, "O. K. You weren't asleep. Stand to, now. Here she comes!"

HE reached forward, threw another switch on the panel. A low, moaning plaint throbbed from the transceiving set. There was an instant of silence in the earphones, then Eddie's voice, crisp now and businesslike, said, "A couple of mils here. Kick 'er up to eighty per cent modulation."

Bennett adjusted a dial. The pitch of the broadcasting test note rose from a low moan to shrill, piercing squeal. Eddie's voice clipped hastily, "O. K. That's plenty. You can make China on that channel." He paused a moment, said plaintively, "Say, Neil, when are we goin' home? It's nearly two o'clock."

Bennett made a notation in his book, grinned sardonically at his microphone.

"What do you want to go home for? You're getting just as much sleep out here. And you'd better get used to it. It may be a month yet before I decide just where we'll build the new station. Got to work nights to avoid interference. You know that as well as I do."

Eddie's answer was terse and ether-shaking. Bennett laughed.

"Yeah, but is it my fault if you spend your off-nights holding hands with that switchboard girl? Anyhow, we've done all we can to-night. C'mon in, if you can find your way back."

He slipped off the earphones, turned the set off, and bent over his notebook again. As he worked, his elbow accidentally touched a poised knife-switch. Silently, the blade fell into place, sending the shrill test-hum out anew. Preoccupied with his calculations, Bennett overlooked it.

Minutes slipped by. Bennett lifted his head suddenly, scowled into the dark. Time Eddie was getting there. Maybe the dumb cluck had lost his——

SOMEWHERE to the north a siren moaned, rose to a shrill, racing scream. Bennett jerked erect, his notes forgotten. That was a police car, and it was traveling fast!

Farther south another siren answered, and then a third.

For a moment Bennett listened, frowning. The cops were after some one, all right. But it wasn't a straight-away chase. The cars seemed to be circling, turning back on their tracks like baffled hounds!

Bennett snatched up his head-set, fum-

THE CAST

LLOYD NOLAN	Neil Bennett
ANN SOTHERN	Fay Stevens
Douglass Dumbrille	Beau Gardner
John Arledge	Eddie House
George McKay	Mitch Cook

Story by Henry Wales and Ferdinand Reyher
Screenplay by Fred Niblo, Jr., and Ferdinand Reyher.
Directed by Albert Rogell.

A fictionization of the Columbia picture of the same title.

bled swiftly to throw his receiver into the police-broadcast channel. Then he swore frantically, snatched at the forgotten switch.

Even as he grabbed it, there was the roar of a racing motor and a truck swung wildly down the lane into the field. It was the ABC truck, with Eddie House, pop-eyed and gesticulating behind the wheel.

He jumped down, yelled, "Hey, Neil! For cripes sake shut down! You're 'jamming' the cops' broadcast! There's a hold-up an——"

But the switch under Bennett's fingers was already clear. The droning hum in the head phones stopped abruptly. In its place the voice of the police broadcaster snapped through, clear and urgent.

"Calling all cars! Calling all cars! Interference gone now. Get this! Two mugs tried to crack Bayview First National. Robbery unsuccessful, but shot and killed night watchman. Escaped in black sedan, license number 6-R-415. Last seen going west on North Shore Road. Police broadcast jammed by interference from unknown source, so the bandits have a fifteen-minute start. Repeat description: black sedan——"

BENNETT snapped the receiver off, said ruefully, "Damn! And I had to be the one that jammed the cops!"

Eddie House drew a long breath, mopped his face unhappily.

"And how it was you! One of the radio cars jumped me just as I was pullin' onto the highway. If it hadn't been that you was jammin' their radio, and even a cop could tell I was shut down, they'd 'a' put the slug on me right there. But I give 'em a line an'——"

Bennett said sardonically, "Yeah? It couldn't have been such a hot line, though. Here they come!"

A light-green coupé swung into the lane, jerked to a stop beside Eddie's truck. Two uniformed men scrambled out, walked swiftly across the field toward the radio men. The first one, burly and red-faced, with a sergeant's stripes on his sleeve, stared suspiciously at Neil Bennett.

"What's goin' on here, anyhow?" he snapped. Somebody just jammed the life outa a hold-up alarm, an' I got a triple-A hunch it was——"

"It's a good hunch," Neil said quietly. "I jammed that broadcast. It was an accident. I'm sorry. We're an American Broadcasting experiment crew, testing for a new station. I just happened to get on the police channel by mistake. It won't happen again."

The sergeant snorted. "It better not happen again! And, anyhow, how do I know——"

"You can check up on us," Bennett said crisply. "This is all ABC equipment. Look it over. Here are my licenses. And you can check us with J. J. Held. He's acting director of ABC. Is that enough?"

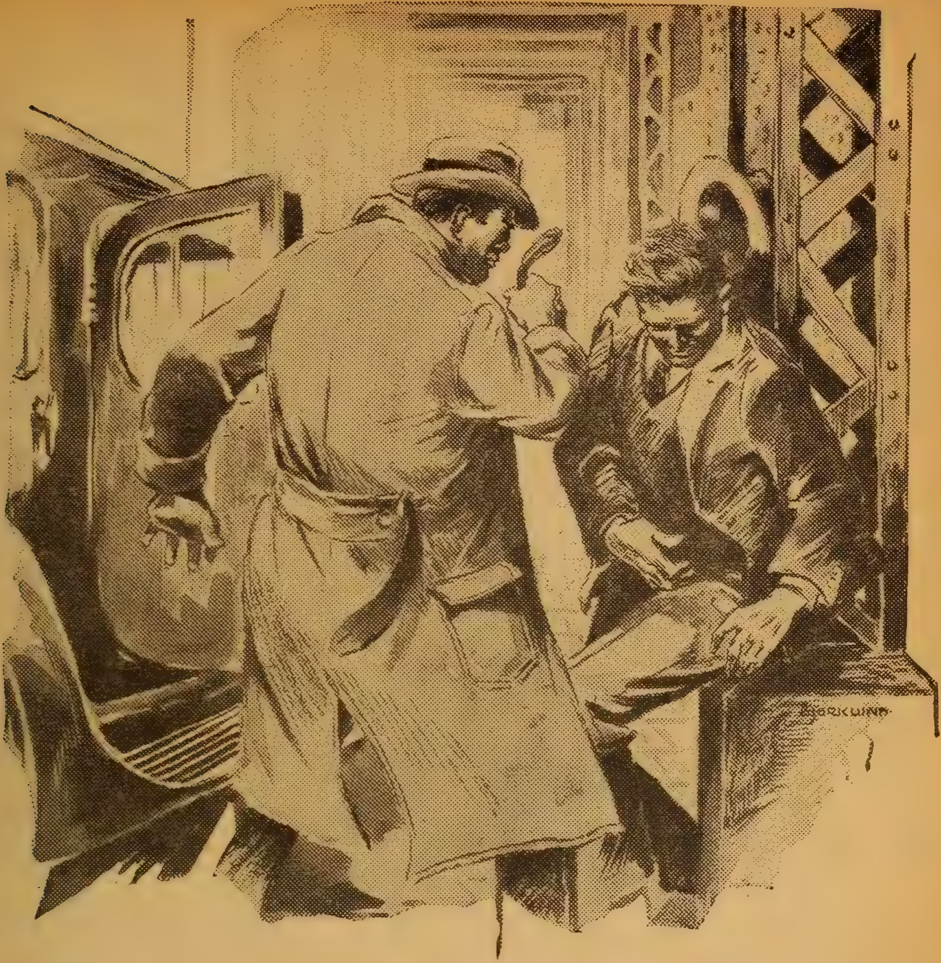
The policeman handed Bennett's papers back to him, growled, "Yeah, it's enough till you pull another boner like it. Then it's a jail sentence. And don't forget it!"

He turned on his heel and strode back to his car, followed by the driver. Eddie stared after them, murmuring, "Gee, Neil, you shouldn't ought to lip a cop that way. I know that guy. Name's Flannigan, and he's poison if you rub him the wrong way."

"Forget it," Bennett said wearily. "It won't ever happen again. Come on now. Let's get this junk aboard and roll for home."

FOR ten minutes they worked with swift precision, dismantling the transceiver apparatus and stowing it aboard the truck. Bennett worked silently, still sore at himself for the slip he had made. Mucking up a police band and letting a bunch of killers go free was pretty bad!

They shoved the last of the portable apparatus into the truck, climbed aboard.



Neil ducked instinctively. Too late. He felt the stunning blow, saw lights. Then—blackness.

For two miles they bumped gingerly over the rough country lane, then swung onto the smooth stretch of the North Shore Road.

Eddie relaxed then, let his pudgy hands rest more lightly on the wheel. Neil Bennett was bending over his notes again, studying them in the light from the dashboard. The truck braked suddenly.

Bennett jerked his head up, said, "Hey! What's the idea."

"Guy wants a lift," Eddie said tersely. "Why not?"

Neil shrugged, stared through the windshield at the man who stood a little ahead in the glare of the headlights, jerking a hopeful thumb out over the concrete. He was slender, good-looking in a hard way. His dark suit and hat were smart, good quality.

The truck slowed to a stop. Bennett tensed a little as the man walked toward them. That robbery at Bayview——

Eddie reached across to swing the door open, said affably, "What's the matter, Buddy? Your girl make you walk home?"

The stranger grinned ruefully, said, "Nothing like that. I blew a tire a couple of miles back. Give me a lift as far as the Green Tree Inn and I'll stand you boys a drink."

"Sure," Eddie said. "You live there?"

The stranger smiled faintly, his eyes flicking from Eddie's face to Neil Bennett's.

"I own the joint," he said. "Name's Gardner. 'Beau' Gardner to my friends."

NEIL relaxed, shoved over to let Gardner climb in. The guy was all right. Or if he wasn't, they'd soon find out. The Green Tree Inn was just a few miles down the pike.

Eddie slipped the truck into gear and they rolled forward again. Gardner drew a long breath.

"Boy, I sure thought I was in for a walk! A couple of cars passed me, but when I flagged 'em down they just put on the gas and went past like bats out of hell."

Eddie chuckled. "No wonder. There's a bunch of gunmen loose somewhere in this part of the island. Those cars probably had heard about it."

Gardner whistled. "So that was it!" He shot a swift look at the two men beside him, said, "Did they—did the cops get these guys?"

Eddie shook his head. "Naw. The cops had the radio on 'em, but—uh—somebody kinda got on the police band and jammed 'em. By the time—uh—somebody got off the wave, the bandits were clear."

Gardner looked puzzled, said, "I don't quite——"

Eddie started to explain further, but Neil Bennett jerked a vicious sign-off elbow into his loquacious assistant's ribs. Eddie shut down—temporarily.

Gardner twisted a little in his seat, peered curiously into the back of the apparatus-filled truck. His voice was carefully casual as he said, "Say, what are you fellows, anyway? Linemen?"

Neil Bennett shook his head. "No, radio."

"That's it," Eddie chipped in cheerfully. "ABC field crew. We been out testin' for sites for a new station. Gotta work nights like this so we won't interfere with other stations."

THERE was an odd note in Gardner's voice as he said, "So you won't interfere——" He smiled in sudden understanding. "I get it. The 'somebody' who messed that police call——"

"Not a bit of it!" Eddie said hastily. "The—uh—cops thought so, but—uh—all a mistake——"

Gardner laughed. "That's O. K., Buddy. It won't go any further than me. But, say, there's angles to this radio business I never thought of. You mean to say that with a portable set like this——"

Neil Bennett said curtly, "Nothing like that. It was just an accident. A chance in a thousand. It couldn't happen again."

Eddie shot him an injured look, said, "Whaddaya mean, Neil, *couldn't* happen? Why, with an outfit like this——"

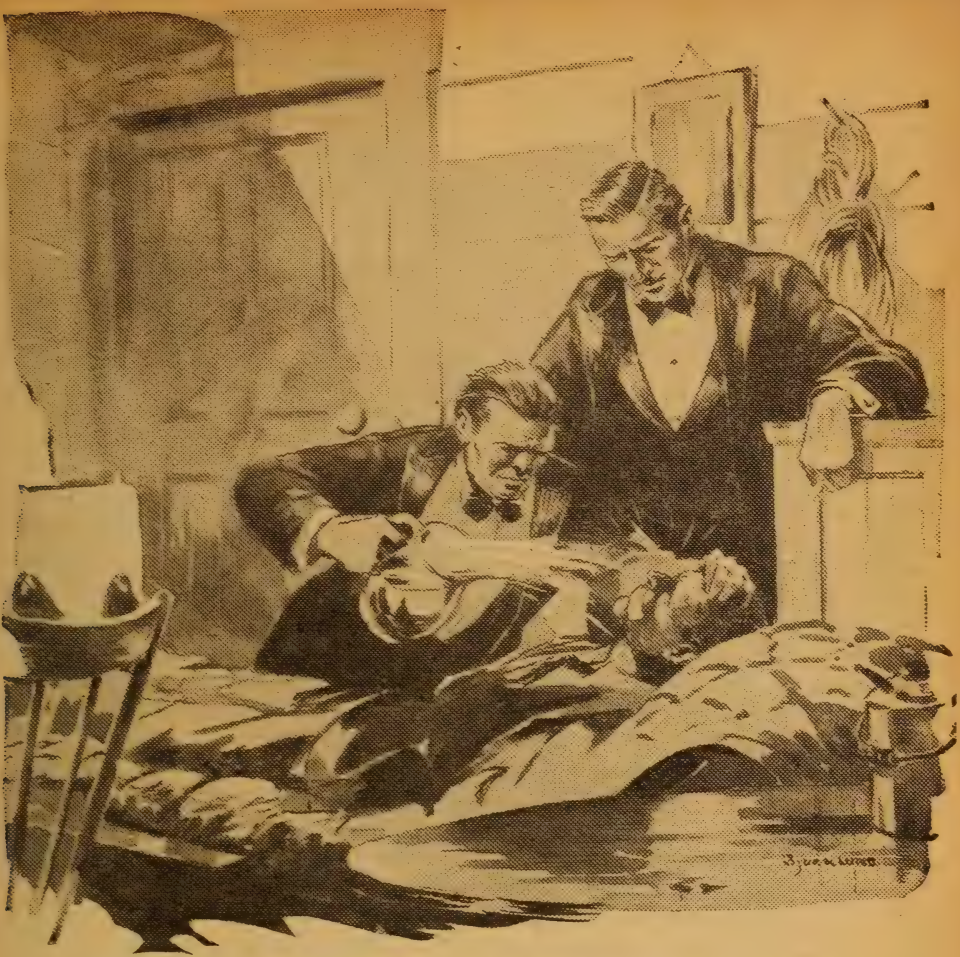
Bennett gouged out with his elbow again. Eddie signed off abruptly.

Ahead of them a Neon sign blazed "Green Tree Inn" against the dark. Eddie maneuvered into the driveway, drew to a stop near the door. Gardner climbed out to the gravel, said, "This is the place, boys. Come on in and have one on the house."

For a moment Neil Bennett hesitated. He still wasn't quite sure. But Eddie was already on the ground, heading for the door. With a wry smile, Bennett followed.

Once inside, his suspicions subsided. A waiter came forward, spoke to Gardner with the obvious deference of an employee. And the roadhouse itself looked respectable, well-mannered.

Beyond the circle of tables, a girl in evening dress was singing to the muted



Neil shuddered convulsively as the icy water dashed against his face.

accompaniment of a small orchestra. Neil checked in the doorway, listened with sudden surprise. She had a voice, all right! More to it than just the notes. That special something—personality. And she wasn't hard to look at, either!

NEIL looked up, flushed slightly as he caught Gardner's eyes on him. Neil grinned, said lightly, "Nice voice that girl's got."

Gardner nodded slightly. "I think so. Like to meet her?"

There was an odd glint in his eyes, partly amusement, partly something else. He led the two radio men to a corner table, caught the girl's eye as she finished her song and bowed graciously to her applause.

She came across to them as the orchestra struck into a blues number and couples started to drift out onto the floor. Gardner said, "Fay, meet a couple of friends of mine. Miss Fay Stevens, Mr.——"

"Bennett," Neil said. "And this is Eddie House. He'd be a good guy if he didn't sleep when he ought to be talking, and talk when he'd be better off asleep."

Eddie said, "Aw, now, Neil——"

Fay Stevens smiled, slid gracefully into the chair that Neil drew back for her. Gardner said, "Buy 'em a drink, Fay, and be nice to 'em. They just did me a pretty good turn."

Then he patted Neil Bennett's shoulder lightly, and said, "Excuse me a moment. Got to see how things are going."

He walked lightly away, nodding to couples at the table as he passed. Neil didn't watch him go, for the very good reason that Fay Stevens had all his eyes. Close to, she was even better looking than he had first thought, if that was possible. Neil gave her an engaging grin, went into direct action.

"YOU'VE got a nice voice, Miss Stevens. Too nice for a small-time place like this. You're wasting your time."

Eddie made a sudden, gurgling noise in his high-ball. Neil shot him a stern look. Eddie subsided. Fay Stevens laughed a little uncertainly.

"You do work fast, don't you? For a minute I thought you meant it."

Neil grinned. "Let's get better acquainted, then. Dance?"

She nodded and followed him to the floor. For five minutes, talking to her, feeling her featherweight on his arm, Neil managed to forget pretty completely where he was and how he had gotten there.

Then the music stopped, they drifted back to their table. Eddie was gone. Neil scowled, leaned back in his chair to look through the door into the bar. Eddie was there, all right, flanked on one side by Beau Gardner, on the other by one of Gardner's bull-necked assistants, named "Mitch."

Eddie held an empty glass in one hand, made demonstrating movements with the other. He turned a little, caught Neil's eye fixed on him. As he put his glass down hastily and came back to the table, Neil stood up and said:

"Come on, chump. We've got to be on our way." He turned to Fay Stevens. "That's a date, then? To-morrow at two?"

She hesitated a moment, turned to Gardner. "Oh, Beau, Mr. Bennett says he can get me a radio audition. But I don't know——"

Gardner's eyes flicked swiftly across her eager face. Then he smiled. "Sure," he said. "That's fine, Fay. Bennett's in radio, all right. And he's a good guy. You go ahead."

Neil grinned. "Swell. Thanks for the drinks, Gardner. Be seeing you."

OUTSIDE by the truck he shoved Eddie forcibly away from the wheel.

"*You* don't drive. Not after lettin' those guys pour high-balls down your hatch like that. I suppose you told 'em everything—how the transceiver works—how we jammed the cops and all the rest of it."

"Nottatall." Eddie hiccupped indignantly. "Jus' sort of explained things to 'em. You got a fine right to talk, anyhow! Promised that dame an audition. Ol' J. J. Held'll be so hot at you after the cops complain about what happened t'-night that——"

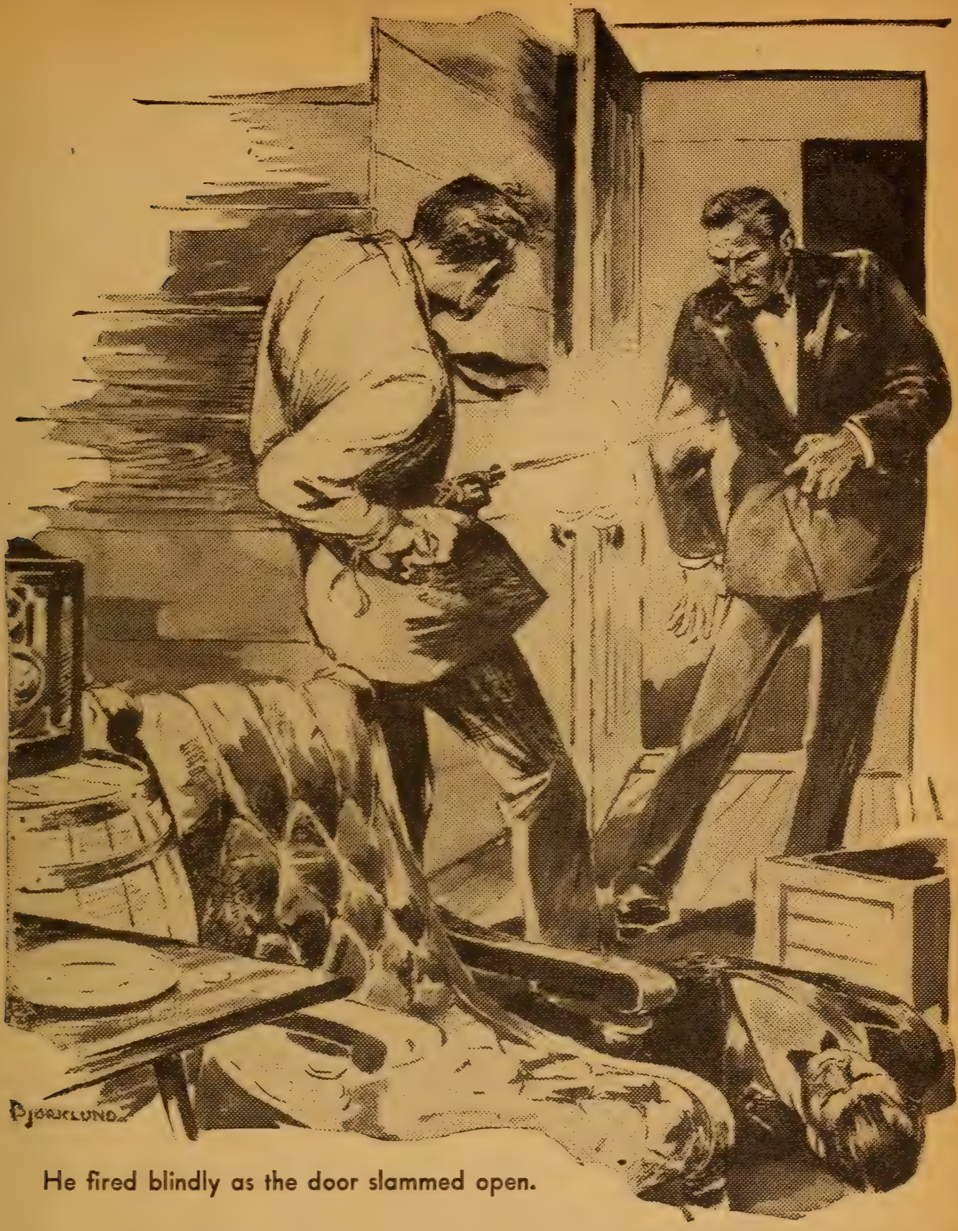
"Forget it!" Neil snapped. "She'll get the audition." He drove for a moment in silence. Then: "That guy Gardner—there's something fishy about him. What would he want to pump you about the testing apparatus for, anyhow?"

"Can't imagine," Eddie said. "Jus' scientific curiosity, I guess."

"Yeah," Neil said. "And maybe not."

He drove on in silence. Twice, as he threaded through the sleeping Long Island towns, he had an odd feeling that he was being followed. But when he slowed, looked back, there was no trailing car in sight. On the seat beside him, Eddie snored loudly.

BACK in Manhattan, he stopped in front of Eddie House's apartment, shook his assistant awake. Eddie stretched, and



He fired blindly as the door slammed open.

said sleepily, "Yeah, but how about the truck?"

"I'll take it in," Neil said. He scribbled a sheet from his book, stuck it in Eddie's fist. "I'm going to finish my calculations to-night, and get a late sleep to-morrow. I may not get up to ABC much before two myself, so give this note to Ted Lane. It'll get Fay Stevens her audition, all right. And tell Ted if he's bright he'll give her a guest spot on the Murgatroyd program at seven. Don't you forget, or I'll ram a mike down your throat!"

"I won't forget," Eddie yawned from the sidewalk, "but if you think you can put over a fast one like that on ol' J. J. Held——"

Neil said. "Nuts!" slipped the truck into gear.

The ABC garage was farther uptown, on 57th, near Tenth. Neil swung into Ninth Avenue, rolled smartly along under the looming shadow of the "L."

As he was crossing 54th, still under the "L," a dark sedan crept up on his left, cut sharply across between the pillars. Neil swore as he jammed on his brakes.

The sedan swerved, jolted to a stop. Metal squealed as the fenders ground together. Still swearing, Neil jumped down to the pavement. A man climbed out from behind the wheel of the sedan.

"Sorry, bud," he said. "Guess it was my fault."

"You're damn right it was!" Neil snapped. "What the——"

"Yeah," the other said softly, "an' I guess this is my fault, too."

Neil saw his arm swing back, ducked instinctively. Too late. The arm swung down. Neil felt the stunning blow against his ear, saw flaming, lurid lights. Then—blackness.

IT seemed ages later when he came to. He knew it was hours anyhow, because it was daylight again.

He tried to move a little, felt the metal pressure of handcuffs on his wrists. His mouth was bound shut, too, gagged with tape. He was lying on a cot in a small room with drawn shades. His head hurt like the devil.

He tried to shift on the cot, relaxed suddenly as he heard some one rattle the handle of the door. Through slitted eyelids he watched the door open, a man come in. It was Beau Gardner's henchman, Mitch!

Mitch stared at him, then said over his shoulder, "He's still out, chief. 'Birdie' certainly took a healthy crack at him!"

Gardner's smooth voice said, "He'll come around. And even if he doesn't, it won't be much skin off our noses. I could use him, though. It'll make the racket easier."

In spite of himself, Neil felt his muscles tighten.

"I guess you know what you're up to, Beau," Mitch said, "but it's a little too fast for me."

"It's simple," Gardner said. "The old rackets are all washed up. Look what happened last night at Bayview. If this cluck hadn't been testing and jammed the cops' radio, we would have been in plenty hot water!"

"I get it," Mitch said slowly. "You mean the next time we pull a job we can jam the cops ourselves an'——"

Gardner snorted derisively. "I said *big* money. You heard what the dumb assistant said at the bar. With that outfit you swiped last night, we can jam anything on the air. Get that? *Anything!*

"There's millions tied up in radio. Some big commercial broadcast's on the air. We jam it, ruin the program. Thousands of dollars of radio time and talent wasted! The outfit can be operated from a moving truck, so before the cops can put any kind of radio spotters on us, we'll be miles off to somewhere else. How long do you figure the radio company'll be able to stand that before they kick through with heavy sugar?"

MITCH whistled. "There's somethin' there, all right! But what if this guy don't come to, or won't coöperate? We gotta have him, don't we, to run the outfit?"

"Nothing like it. I got Ernie Schall on the job already. If there was ever a better radio man on Rum Row, I never heard of him. He's got the radio outfit almost moved over into that old laundry truck already. He says there's nothing to it, and he ought to know."

Through his eyelashes, Neil saw Gardner smile mirthlessly, then go on. "And here's the swell part. I figure the take will be two hundred grand, at the very least! And then, we'll give 'em the criminal—dead! This guy's missing already, with his radio truck. The cops suspect him of jammin' their broadcast last night. So when they find him and his outfit smashed up against a telephone pole somewhere——"

He broke off with an expressive shrug. It took all Neil Bennett's control to lie still, continue his heavy, regular breathing. So that was it! Gardner would blackmail the broadcasters and *he'd* get the blame! Then, some day——

GARDNER said harshly, "Get some water. I want to bring this mug around and learn things."

Mitch's footsteps retreated, came back again. Neil shuddered convulsively as the icy water dashed against his face.

"That brought him to!" Mitch said.

He grabbed Neil by the shoulder, jerked him erect.

"On your toes, bright boy. The boss wants to talk to yuh!"

Roughly, he jerked the tape from Neil's lips. The radio man swayed with pretended grogginess on the edge of the cot, stared around him.

He had a good look at the room now. It was small, furnished with nothing but the cot he sat on and a couple of chairs. But there was a radio in one corner, with a telephone on the stand beside it.

Gardner stepped in front of him, a hard smile on his face.

"What I want is the names of a couple of big shots over at ABC. How about it?"

Neil stared at him, said nothing. Gardner smiled, tight-lipped, said, "All right, if you want to be that way. But you'll talk."

He turned to Mitch, said, "Tell Ernie to take his stuff to the first place I told him about. Tell him to jam hell out of the ABC station for about five minutes just to give 'em a taste, and then phone here!"

Mitch nodded, left swiftly. Neil Bennett sat very still on the edge of the bed, his mind working furiously. If there were only some way he could send out word! Eddie would be in the studio, getting a grilling on last night's happenings. If he could only ring him in on it, give him some kind of a clue!

Neil dropped his eyes, stared hopelessly at the edge of the cot beside him. The edge of a packing box stuck out from beneath the bed, showed the stencilled legend, "Green Tree Inn."

Neil's muscles tightened suddenly. It was an idea! A thin one, but Gardner had asked for the names of some "big shots" at ABC. Well, he'd get them!

OUTSIDE, there was the sound of a truck grinding over the gravel, the heavy throb of its motor as it picked up speed on the road.

Gardner grinned sardonically at Neil, walked across to the radio and switched it on. Neil said, "370 kilocycles—that's 69 on your dial."

Gardner spun the knob, said, "Obliging, aren't you? Stay that way, and you'll save yourself lots of grief."

Neil shrugged, said nothing. He had to stall now, play for time. The radio hummed, warmed to the pulsating rhythm of a dance band. The number ended, and the announcer's voice gave the station identification.

"The next number by Lennie Marin's boys will be——"

His voice vanished abruptly, drowned in a raucous, grating squeal. Neil grimaced involuntarily, swore under his breath. Ernie Schall was right on the job, had nailed the ABC wavelength to a fraction!

Neil had a swift mental picture of one of Gardner's men tooling the disguised truck over the lonely Long Island roads, the renegade radio man crouched in the back, manipulating the dials of Neil's beloved set with deadly skill.

The frightful squealing continued.

Gardner threw his head back, laughed delightedly.

The squealing stopped abruptly. Ted Lane's voice came back.

Gardner gave a satisfied nod, switched the radio off again.

FIVE, ten minutes slipped by. Then Gardner picked up the telephone, said sharply, "Ernie! You on deck?"

Neil Bennett's eyes narrowed as he watched. He had the whole set-up now. The Green Tree Inn must have been an important headquarters in the old rum-running days. The phone was a concealed private line, with no tie-in with a commercial company.

Probably there were a dozen points along the North Shore that could contact the inn that way with no chance of recorded calls. Ernie could move from place to place, in direct touch with Gardner all the time, while he pulled his dirty work on the air waves, and always keep a good jump ahead of direction-finders while he was doing it!

He was on the job at point Number One already. Gardner said into the phone, "O. K. Now, here's the dope. Contact the ABC on that short wave—in code. Tell 'em that last bit of interference was just a taste of what's coming. Got it?"

Apparently Ernie had it. There was a pause. Gardner swung toward Neil. His face was harsh now, merciless.

"Your turn now, mug! I want the names of the big shots—the right guys to dicker with!"

NEIL'S eyes dropped again to the box with the stencilled legend.

"Well," he said slowly, "There's J. J. Held. He's general manager."

Gardner nodded, relayed the name over the phone.

"Then," Neil said, "there's Bernard Pine, the legal counsel for ABC."

"Right!" Gardner clipped. "The mouthpiece. That's who we want!"

Neil hesitated a moment, tried to make his voice casual as he said, "And there's J. Edgar House."

Gardner swung from the phone, snapped, "Huh? What's he do?"

Neil shrugged. "Oh, he's a sort of fixer for the company——"

He held his breath while Gardner hesitated suspiciously, then let it out again as the racketeer relayed the third name over the phone. At least, Gardner hadn't recognized Eddie House's name. And back at the studio, that ought to mean something, thrown in that way with the real big shots. If the thing only worked successfully——"

Neil drew a long breath. It was done now, anyhow.

Gardner snapped into the phone, "Got 'em? All right, tell 'em those are the guys we deal with, and no others. Make it hot!"

He looked across the lifted phone at Neil, said, "Tell 'em, just to show what we can do, we'll jam the Murgatroyd hour to-night at seven! It's their biggest commercial program, so that ought to get action. And sign that message Neil Bennett!"

He slapped the phone down triumphantly, said, "I guess you get it now, mug! You take the rap! And it isn't all business, picking the Murgatroyd hour, either. Fay Stevens thinks you're pretty swell because you got her a spot as guest artist on it. She won't think so when it's jammed, and they tell her you did it! Think again before you try to get your hooks in another guy's girl!"

"Be yourself!" Neil said harshly. "She wouldn't any more give time to a heel like you than she'd——"

Gardner crossed the room swiftly, drove his fist into Neil's face!

Neil's head slapped back against the wall. Before he could move, Gardner whipped a roll of tape from his pocket, jammed hastily torn strips across Neil's mouth. Then he turned on his heel and left the room.

NEIL got to his feet, crossed groggily to the radio and turned it on. It was tough work, with his hands manacled behind him, but he managed to throw the short-wave switch, get onto the police band. Headquarters was monotonously droning out the numbers of stolen cars.

Neil cut the voice to a whisper, waited. He knew it wouldn't be long. J. J. Held wasn't the man to waste time!

Ten minutes went by, then the police broadcaster broke off abruptly with, "Attention all cars! Attention all metropolitan police stations! Wanted—Neil Bennett, technical expert of the American Broadcasting Company. This man is six feet tall, sandy hair, blue eyes, light complexion. He has stolen a portable broadcasting truck belonging to ABC and is using it for criminal interference with the programs of that company. Motive, extortion. This man is probably desperate. Take no chances! Repeat. Wanted——"

With a sick grimace, Neil switched off. So he was a criminal, a hunted man! Gardner's scheme had worked. ABC would never be able to fight the racket. Nothing left now but the pay-off, the finding of Neil's body somewhere with the smashed, incriminating transceiving apparatus.

Desperately, Neil swung to the window. He had to get out!

Steps sounded outside the door. Neil flung himself onto the cot. The door opened and Mitch came in. He grinned at Neil, put a chair halfway between the door and window and sat down. Then he drew a flat, blue-black automatic from his pocket, pointed it in the general direction of Neil's head, and settled himself comfortably to wait.

TWO hours later he was still waiting. Neil watched from the cot, sullen, hopeless. The radio was going now, tuned to ABC. The sequence of programs told Neil it was almost seven. Beau Gardner came in, said, "It's your big moment, Bennett. In another ten minutes your name'll be a household word. Or at least as soon as the papers get out!"

Neil glared helplessly. His mind was made up now. He knew his long shot had failed. He was going to make a break, even though it meant certain death. But at least, if they found bullets in him, some people would suspect the truth!

The radio program changed. Ted Lane's voice came on, smoothly running through the patter of the Murgatroyd hour.

"Do you suffer from gas, sour stomach, or dizzy spells? Two generations of satisfied users rise to proclaim Murgatroyd's famous Fruit Flavor Tablets, the remedy——"

Lane's voice blurred, vanished in a tearing screech! Somewhere, Ernie Schall was doing his stuff!

Gardner and Mitch were laughing delightedly. Ernie Schall was playing tricks, letting garbled bits of the program through, clamping down again. Mitch rocked hysterically in his chair, then froze suddenly as some one rapped on the door.

Gardner whirled out. Neil heard muttered voices, some one saying:

"There's a slip somewhere, I tell you! The look-outs are phoning in! Cop cars all around and closing in!"

Gardner's voice said fiercely, "They can't be after Ernie's radio car. He's ten miles away—the Van Nostrand place!"

Neil's heart jumped. Maybe Eddie *had* caught on!

Gardner's voice snapped, "Come on. Get out the car. We'll have to get Bennett out of here!"

THERE was a vanishing rush of footsteps. Neil tensed. It was now or never!

Mitch was standing uncertainly, half facing the door. Neil braced himself, flung himself headlong from the cot.

His shoulder hit Mitch's knees, knocked the thug in a spinning sprawl. Mitch's head slammed the floor and he went limp. The gun clattered from his hands.

Neil wrenched around, grabbed it, managed to twist it awkwardly to his hip, facing the door. He fired blindly as the door slammed open. Beau Gardner, charging through, gun in hand, staggered, lurched back out of sight.

A gun blazed from the darkness of the hallway, kicked plaster behind Neil's head. He fired again, praying for a lucky hit. There was no answering shot from the hall. Suddenly, sirens screamed in the road outside. There were yells, a thunder of shots. Some one screamed shrilly. Then silence.

NEIL drew a long breath. His knees felt suddenly weak. He slumped down on the bed, still keeping his awkward grip on the gun.

Feet clattered in the hallway. He twisted around, trying to cover the door again.

Then he relaxed with a broad, satisfied grin. The first man through the door was a cop! The second was a cop, too—Sergeant Flannigan of last night's patrol. And behind him came Eddie House, pop-eyed and breathless!

Eddie gave a whoop of joy as he saw Neil, took in the meaning of the handcuffs, the adhesive gag.

"Didn't I tell you?" he yelled at Flannigan. "He's no blackmailer! The whole thing was a frame!"

Flannigan ripped the tape from Neil's mouth.

Neil said, "Thanks. First thing is the radio truck! It's operating from a place called Van Nostrand's. I heard Gardner say so. Know where it is?"

"You bet!"

Flannigan whirled, barked an order into the hall. Motors roared outside.

"And then"—Neil rattled the cuffs that held his hands—"I'd kind of like to get rid of these. I think the guy on the floor there has the keys in his pocket."

Flannigan went swiftly through the unconscious Mitch's pockets, came up finally with the keys. A twist, and Neil was free again.

Flannigan stepped back with a grin. "For a guy that was hog-tied, you seem to have put up a pretty fair scrap. I guess it was you who winged Gardner. We caught him on the stairs."

Neil nodded. "Yeah, but it was touch and go. If you hadn't come when you did——"

"THAT," Sergeant Flannigan said, "is somethin' I haven't figured yet. House, here, practically kidnaped me and made me knock over this joint. He was sure you were here. But how——"

Eddie grinned, dragged a paper from his pocket. "It was Neil's message—the one that was supposed to name the ABC pay-off men.

"I knew it was a phony—first because *my* name was one, along with a real big shot like J. J. Held, and second because there isn't any such guy as Bernard Pine! It had me stumped—till I happened to look at the last names in the order they came over the short-wave. Look at 'em yourself. Held—Pine—House!

"Then it was easy. Pine—that's a green tree—Held Green Tree House—*Held Green Tree Inn*. Get it?"

Flannigan said, "Yeah, but of all the crazy——"

Neil Bennett said, "It worked, didn't it?"

He crossed to the radio, twisted the dial to bring the ABC broadcast in. It was clear again. Over his shoulder, he said:

"The Murgatroyd program's still got half an hour to run. Fay Stevens might be next. I couldn't just sit back and miss that, could I?"

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